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ABSTRACT

As this nation's settlers and immigrants built homes, railroads, and plowed the fields, they told their story through songs and ballads. Transmitting this cultural heritage is the goal of this volume containing songs, bibliographies, teaching ideas, and record and book reviews. These three issues focus on the songs of the railroads, the farmers, and the cultural ties with Europe. The history of the country unfolds through the songs of the railroad which is the focus of the first issue. Despite the importance of farmers in building this country and in creating our heritage, they have become forgotten men and women. The second issue is dedicated to the theme of farmers in our history. In particular the focus is on farmers of the midwest with such songs as "Skip to My Lou" and "Little Old Sod Shanty." The cultural ties with Europe are depicted in issue three through the ancient ballads that stand at the threshold of modern U.S. history and literature. These ballads are differentiated from other songs in our tradition because they tell a story. The vast majority of the old ballads were created and sustained by an oral tradition. Issue number Three also contains a colonial history social studies/music project and folksongs from Papua, New Guinea. (SM)

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FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM

Volume VI, Numbers 1-3

1985-1986

Edited by:
John A. Scott
Laurence I. Seidman

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FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM

A NETWORK OF TEACHERS OF HISTORY, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND THE HUMANITIES - A NEWSLETTER

Volume VI #1 Autumn 1985 Copyrighted $5.00 per year

Editors

§John A. Scott
Fieldston School
(New York)
& Rutgers University
(New Jersey)

§Laurence I. Seidman
C. W. Post Center, Long Island University
(New York)

all communications to
Laurence I. Seidman
140 Hill Park Avenue
Great Neck, N.Y. 11021
516 466 8546

Advisory Panel

Sandy Behrend, *Art Teacher*
(New Jersey)

Bill Bonyan, *Folksinger*
(Maine)

Anna Fulhart
Elementary School Teacher
(Indiana)

Jenny Vincent Welles
Hispanic Folk Music Resource Person
(New Mexico)

J. Calvin Holsinger
Evangel College of Arts and Sciences
(Missouri)

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Our New Format -- A Booklet

We are reducing page size to 6½" x 8½" from our old 8½" x 10½". Despite the smaller size, each page contains exactly as much information as before.

1) We think it will be easier for our readers to handle the newsletter and to store it away on your shelf or in your file.
2) You will be able to see both pages at once and won't have to turn back and forth to the next page on a two-page layout.
3) It will reduce our printing and mailing costs and help keep our low price.
4) The newsletter will be easier and faster to mail off to subscribers.
5) My basement is crammed with hundreds of copies of the first 16 issues. They are spilling over into the rest of the house. The new size will take up less storage room.

We have already printed up all issues of Volumes I,II & III in this new booklet format. Each Volume has a yellow cover with a complete yearly table of contents of all 3 issues of each volume. If you have lost your old copies or would prefer the new size for easier storage & handling, send $5 for each Volume. See back page to order Volumes I,II, III. We plan to have Volumes IV & V in this new size also at $5 per Volume within the next few months.The new format is due to the hard work and clever idea of our colleague, Cal Holsinger at Evangel College ,Springfield, Missouri.

Bobbie Raymond 1179 Shotwell
San Francisco, CA 94110

I took a sabbatical leave four years ago, did research on folk songs related to the history of the San Francisco Bay area, and I made tapes of folk songs for teachers to use in correlation with their teaching.

My school district ignored my work and finally lost it (I, of course have copies). Two weeks ago I received a $3,000 grant through the state (and our district) to upgrade instruction in my class by using folk songs and related materials. So I am happy to be able to carry on what I started. I'm now broadening my approach and enthusiastically planning how to spend my grant money.

So you see, finding your community is a most meaningful event.

Bobbie's letter is one example of how to enrich your teaching and curriculum.

O. Dean Gregory, Associate Director
The University of Kansas Applied English Center 204 Lippincot, Lawrence, Kansas 66045

Songs, usually folk songs and older popular songs, have been widely used in classes in English as a second language for many years.

Interest is now turning to using currently popular songs in ESL classes. One of my students just completed a master's thesis on the subject, and another is in the process of writing one.

Mary Hatfield P.O. Box 96
Newport, Maine 04953

Thanks for mailing out those back issues so quickly! I am having a great time going through them.

The background material for the songs is exactly what I need for my American History in Story and Song class. I am hoping that a lot of the material that I have been reading about is still available.

I am taking an in-service course from the University of Maine on reading comprehension. I would like to do my "Action Plan" research on the use of folk music and folk tales as tools for comprehension. Anything you could send me on this subject would be appreciated.

Maxine Rodman 221 S. Pekin Road
Woodland, WA 98674

I teach music in elementary school and try to tie it in with every subject being taught. Folk songs work beautifully with social studies, particularly in the 4th and 5th grades and the children love to sing.

I use the accordeon with the Kindergarten and the piano with the 3rd through 5th graders. Before Thanksgiving, for example, I taught a section of Indian songs and poetry, combined with dance. The classes make yearly visits to the convalescent center as well.

I have taught art to music and encourage children to use their imaginations. Music instruction helps the child in sound, direction, and motor skills. There isn't a subject that music cannot relate to.

I'm the mother of five and I do enjoy children. And music is something they can all achieve in - even the ones with learning problems. They all seem eager to go to music. The music seems to soothe any anger in the children.

My only complaint is that there isn't enough time.

Eileen Leavitt Box 9 Osipee
New Hampshire 03864

Your work is an answer to a prayer for me! I've pieced together different folk songs I'd learned over the years whenever I taught American History or Patriotic Holidays to the different elementary grades, but to have a chronological list is a boon.

Kim Vahsholtz 1711 East 31st
Savannah, GA 31404

I am a Girl Scout leader and your Newsletter got me excited about things I can do with my troop! I'm hooked on folk song in the classroom.

JIMMIE RODGERS: THE SINGING BRAKEMAN"

Professor James E. Akenson, a subscriber, friend and teacher at Tennessee Technological University sent us a fascinating seven page article on country singer, Jimmie Rodgers, From Folk Song to Commercial Country. It's an excellent article, but unfortunately we can only print the introduction and Jim's letter telling a bit about the article.

However, we are offering the complete article as a free teaching item. Just mail us 2 22¢ stamps to cover handling and mailing costs and it is yours. Professor Atkinson is an expert in this area of country music. His article not only gives a short bibliography of Jimmie Rodgers, but also includes practical ideas of how studying Jimmie Rodgers readily involves your students in a variety of learning encounters. In addition Jim lists special background sources where you can find out more about this outstanding artist and additional teaching ideas to use in your classroom.

Jim wrote: I tried to give some background information and then some brief descriptions of the types of activities which might be possible with JR. The Jimmie Rodgers prediction sheet is inclosed. The suggested "Manuscript/ Cursive Handwriting" can be useful as reinforcements to various JR lessons. The Likert Scale using smiley faces/sad faces is interesting from the standpoint of the Likert technique and the various recording locations.

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Introduction

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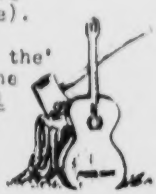
No study of train songs would be complete without Jimmie Rodgers, The Singing Brakeman, who became known as "The Father of Country Music". Born September 8, 1897, Jimmie Rodgers spent much of his early years around trains. Father Aaron Rodgers worked for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad as a section supervisor and young Jimmie worked as a water boy. Later, Jimmie Rodgers became a brakeman on several different railroads thereby giving substance to one of his titles, "The Singing Brakeman."

Many of Jimmie Rodgers' songs dealt with the railroad. Songs such as "Waiting for a Train" and "The Brakeman's Blues" reflect the importance of the train in American life and in country music. To this day, train songs such as "The City of New Orleans"(Willie Nelson) and "Movin' Train" (The Kendall's) reflect the important tradition set by Jimmie Rodgers.

Jimmie Rodgers sold some 12,000,000 records in a career cut short by tuberculosis on May 26, 1933 when he died in New York City. Fittingly, Jimmie Rodgers returned to his Meridian, Mississippi birthplace, his casket borne on a train.

Teachers wishing to obtain Jimmie Rodgers records should purchase the RCA Victor album All About Trains. Hank Snow and Jimmie Rodgers (ANL1-1052) as it features Rodgers singing "Whistling for a Train," "Hobo Bill's Last Ride," "The Brakeman's Blues", "Ben Dewberry's Final Run" and "Train Whistles Blues.""Southern Cannonball" may be obtained on My Rough and Rowdy Ways: The Legendary Jimmie Rodgers" (ANL1-1209e). "The Mystery of Number Five" may be obtained on The Best of the Legendary Jimmie Rodgers (AHL1-3315e).

Teachers wishing a more extensive discussion of using the Jimmie Rodgers' music in their classroom should send away for the free Teaching Item, Jimmie Rodgers: From Folk Song to Commercial Country as listed in this issue under New Free Materials, yours for just two 22¢ stamps.
James E.Akenson Box 5042 Tenn Tech Univ Cookeville, TN 38505



TALKING BLUES by Joan Maute

I have long been a great believer in the power of this medium, the Talking Blues. Not only do I love to write them, but so do my students.

I teach Junior High. Each spring we have the fifth graders from each of the elementary schools come and tour the building (they will enter as sixth graders the following Fall). About three years ago we decided to have an eight grade class write a talking blues to give the students an idea of what to expect in junior high.

I go into a language arts class and spend about 3 periods with them. The first thing I do is sing about five talking blues so they can get a concept of talking blues. I usually use some by Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, Bob Dyland , and of course, Joan Maute. Once they get the idea of the pattern and humor, we try to map out the song.

The entire song is written via the brain storming technique by the class. Obviously they must be led through the process. I start by having them list things that they were concerned about as incoming sixth graders. The list typically includes: changing classes, lockers, showers, the cafeteria, new friends, new teachers, getting lost, etc....

Once we have the list on the board, I have them start the day with verse one. Different students suggest lines and line by line the story is told. The involvement and enthusiasm of the students is great. It usually takes the better part of three class periods to get the whole song written. Once it is complete, the class then goes back and edits the song. Then students volunteer to sing this song for the visiting fifth graders. I accompany them on the guitar but they do the singing and it's their show.

The fifth graders love it that the eight graders have done this for them. Theeigth graders love being stars in front of the fifth graders. The song is also performed for the parents on orientation night. All in all it is very enjoyable and even (gasp) educational!

We never let the class hear the previous songs until they have completed their own. It's amazing how each year the students cover much of the same material but in their own special way. Here's one of the 8th Grade Talking Blues.

1) Clock went off and I got out of bed
Nervous thoughts ran through my head
What to wear? Will I be late?
First day at Hill -- that's just great!

New kids NEW TEACHERS NEW SCHOOL

2)I was eating my cereal, takin' my time
Opened the door and the bus went by!
Started to chase it, keepin' my cool
Got on the bus -- felt like a fool!

LOOKED AROUND ALL I COULD SEE WERE GIANTS - STARIN' AT ME

3) I survived the ride and got to Hill
Met Mr. C.----what a thrill!
Walked around and socialized--
Then the bell rang -- what a surprize!

WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WHERE DO WE GO? I'M LOST!!!

4)Went to the office and what did I see?
Half the other sixth graders a standin' with me.
Askin' questions-- Where to Go?
Finally got to class -- how, I don't know!

I MADE IT ----- TO CLASS!

5)The homeroom teacher gave us ourlocks.
We all tried to open them --what a job!
Twistin' and a turnin'--gettin' confused
Oh! Those locks were being abused.

THEY MUST BE BROKEN THEY DON'T WORK
THEY'RE CHEAP IT'S NOT MY FAULT

6)Went to my locker and a couple more classes
Gettin' more confused as time passes.
Next thing I knew it was time for lunch
Got in line --what a crunch!

CAN I BORROW A DOLLAR? WHERE'S THE HO HO'S?
I DROPPED MY TRAY!!!!

7)Finished lunch and went to P.E.
Went outside-thought I was free.
Worked up a sweat for about an hour
Came back in, and had to take a shower!!!

HOW COME? NO WAY!! NOT ME!!

8)At last the day was coming to a close--
I was walkin' down the hall with books up to my nose
Reading, Social Studies, English and Math,
Science and Health -- I wanted to laugh!

I MADE IT! THIS ISN'T SO HARD!

It's a BREEZE!!!

I know it's hard to get a feeling for the project by just reading,so I have begun having my graduate classes write a talking blues as a class so that they will be able to do a similar exercise with their students. Here's one written by 25 teachers last March.

THE TALKING WILL JUNE EVER COME BLUES

1) Looked at the calendar and what did I see?
Sixty long days starin' back at me.
A hundred and twenty already gone by,
I'm still here and I'm wonderin' why.
Will June ever come?

2) Kids shootin' spit wads out in the hall,
Askin' the same dumb questions they asked last fall.
Acheivement tests around the bend,
If they screw up, I'll get them again!
Pass out the cheat sheets, they're movin' on!

3) My contract says "teach" but it's hard to do,
With meetings, committees, and duties too.
They hired me to motivate
But it seems all I do is calculate...
Orders, attendance figures, book money, and milk money, all that change!

4) Back from vacation, spring's finally in the air.
Kid's bodies are here, but their mind's elsewhere.
Students went to Florida or Mexico.
Teachers sunned in Berwyn or Cicero.
When it didn't rain...or snow!

5) The end's in sight, we'll have it beat,
If we can stand the days for 90+ neat.
It's hard to say if it's the kids or me,
Who's most looking forward to being free...
I'm sure...it's me!

6) The last day's here though I've got my doubt
If I'll ever find the forms I need to check
All's signed and sealed and I'm off at last,
Knowing the summer is gonna go fast.
Then we start again...next fall.

If you've got any questions or need more help, write to Joan Maute 6631 Muirwood Ct., Lisle, Illinois 60532 Phone: 312-961-5381

RAILROADS:
Their History, People and Songs

The century spanning the years 1840 -- 1950 was the great age of the American railroads. American engines were of mammth size and power: compared with them the European machines seemed like midgets. These engines and the iron rails that they ran upon speeded up the opening of an entire continent to settlement and urbanization; they bypassed and sidetracked the coachmen, wagoners and canaleers, who passed into oblivion. The railroads turned all of North America into a single market, accelerated the spread of a uniform culture from coast to coast, developed the capacity for formidable speed. Before the Civil War pioneers crossing the continent by horse and on foot might have to spend six months on the trail from Missouri to San Francisco. By 1870 the giant steam engines with their long strings of coaches and cars were covering the same distance in little more than a week.

Building the railroads and operating them once they were built called into being a whole class of tracklayers and railroad workers. These people came from many ethnic stocks, including especially Irish, Chinese, Black and Latino. The railroads and these workers made possible the rapid transportation of people and of wealth over huge distances; but such advances came at a heavy cost in human life. Irish and Chinese, for example, who worked for the Central Pacific and Union Pacific roads in thrusting ribbons of iron and steel across the continent during the late 1860's suffered much. There is no complete record of the number of their men killed in building those great transcontinental lines, but it ran into the thousands. Men died in explosions set to blast tunnels and to cut paths along rocky gorges; and they were buried in the landslides that followed such explosions. In the heat of summer they dropped dead of exhaustion, and they froze in the icy winters. Pitched battles had to be fought with the Native Americans who knew well enough that iron and steel and steam marked a new age in which the ancient lifestyles were doomed. The Indians, too, were killed in large numbers when troops rounded them up and cleared them from the path of the tracks. Men, women, and children alike died in these federal sweeps.

Railroad operation was dangerous, especially for the workers. Trains collided with each other, or leaped the bridges and tracks. Track workers busy in their daily duties were crushed between coaches and under wheels.

The railroads that once united America are fast disappearing. The trains in their turn are being sidelined by airplanes, automobiles and trucks. The lonesom, mournful high-pitched locomotive whistle is vanishing from the American scene where it was once so familiar a sound that people set their clocks and watches to it as the trains thundered through their fields and past their villages.

Railroad life has been given immortal expression in the songs that the railroad men composed. We reproduce a few of these here to indicate the nature of their message and their immense variety. With the help of such songs young people may recapture the drama of the early industrial age that has now all but vanished.

Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow

The romance of the iron horse is captured in the lonesome whistle's haunting sound as the train speeds across the country. John and Alan Lomax, two of the great pioneer collectors of American folk song, have published many books that are invaluable to teachers and folk singers. They have written the following fine introduction to railroad songs in their volume Best Loved American Folk Songs; and this we would like to share with you.

* * * * *

Lord, I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow,
Lord, I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow,
It blows so lonesome and it blows so low,
It blows like it never blowed before.

ALL THROUGH THE STRIP OF COUNTRY that runs from Maryland, south and west to Oklahoma, which is the land of fiddlers, guitar players, banjo pickers and harp blowers, you can hear them making lonesome whistle tunes on their instruments. A fiddler will pull his bow in a long, minor moan across his top string and then start jerking it in quick, raspy strokes until you can close your eyes and hear a heavy freight train running down a steep grade. A harmonica player will blow out the high, hollering notes of a fast passenger engine, while the guitar player will make a rhythm on his bass strings like a train crossing a trestle. Together they'll play in the rhythm of car wheels clicking over sleepers; as counter-rhythm, they'll whip out the rattling bounce of a caboose as it shakes and jounces along a rough roadbed. Then they'll throw back their heads and holler—

Lord, Lord, I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow.

These folk musicians and the people they're playing for listen to railroad whistles the way fisherfolk listen to bell-buoys and foghorns. Out in the country they tell time by the whistles of the trains that fly past their fields. The railroad whistles bring them good news and bad news. The whistles talk to them about the places they have never been, the women they've never seen, the fine clothes they have never worn.

Lord, I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine,
'Cause the water round here tastes like turpentine.

The whistles talk to them about the folks who have gone down that long, lonesome road and won't be back again.

Every time a freight train makes up in the yard,
Some po' woman got an achin' heart.

The whistles talk to them about the great big raw country they live in. The whistles remind them that every man is a traveler on a lonesome road.

I'm goin' lay my head on that lonesome railroad line,
Let the 219 ease my troubled mind.

Mostly the whistles talk to them about freedom. Before the railroads knit the whole country together in their shining web of steel, these folks were pinned down and forced to inch along across the big sea of the land in wagons. When the railroad whistles began to blow, these people found they could almost fly across their country anytime they paid their fare or caught a free ride on a freight.

Listen to the jingle, the jumble and the roar,
As she glides along the woodland, through the hills, and by the shore,
Hear the mighty rush of the engine and the merry hobo's squaud,
As he rides the rods and brake-beams of the Wabash Cannonball.

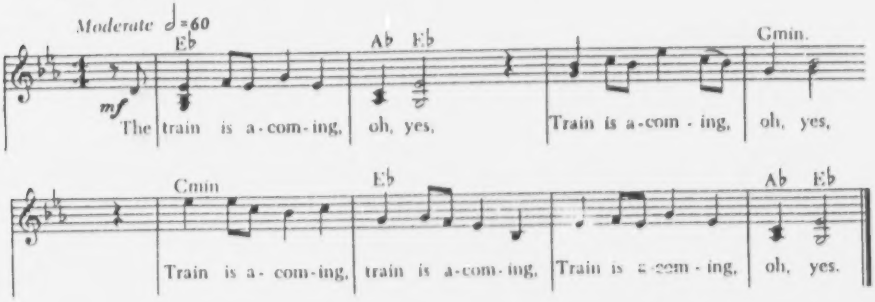
Restless by instinct, travelers by tradition, they began to move around more and more, taking in new towns, new jobs, and new sweethearts. Then, sometimes, when they were off somewhere in a new town, broke and hungry and out of a job, they'd hear that railroad whistle blow and then it meant "home" and all they'd left behind.

If that wheeler runs me right,
I'll be home tomorrow night,
'Cause I'm nine hundred miles from my home . . .
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow.

continued page 13 (bottom)

The Train Is A-Coming

"The Train is A-Coming" is a song which we have taken from Ruth Crawford Seeger's indispensable children's songbook American Folk Songs for Children. This song can be used with very young children who can put their own names and those of their friends into the verses.



2. Better get your ticket, oh, yes,
   Better get your ticket, oh, yes,
   Better get your ticket, better get your ticket,
   Better get your ticket, oh, yes

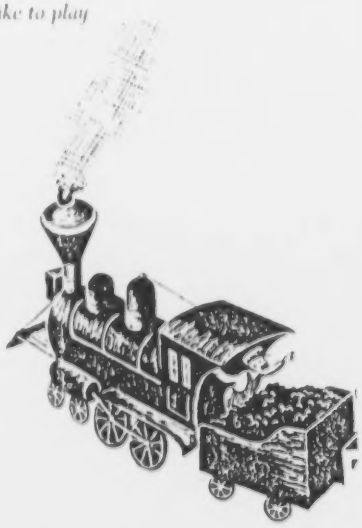
3. Room for a-many more, oh, yes.

IMPROVISATION and RHYTHMIC PLAY: Children like to play train. Sometimes they are cars–

1. Steve is the engine, oh, yes, etc.
2. Joan is the coal car, oh, yes, etc.
   (and so on, through all the kinds of cars that make up freight or passenger trains)

–and sometimes they are trainmen–

3. Jock is the engineer, oh, yes, etc.
4. Pete is the brakeman, oh, yes, etc.
5. Barry is conductor, oh, yes, etc.
6. Patsy is a passenger, oh, yes, etc.



Paddy Works on the Railroad

In eight- een hun-dred and for - ty
one, I put my cor- du - roy breech- es
on, I put my cor -du - roy breech-es
on To work up - on the rail -
way. Fi - li - me oo - ri - oo - ri -
ay, fi - li - me oo - ri -oo - ri -
ay, fi - li - me oo - ri - oo - ri
ay, To work up - on the rail - way.

"Paddy Works on the Railroad" began life in the Irish music halls, and was taken to sea by sailors. Irish immigrants listened to this song and took it westward with them to sing upon construction jobs in the New World, on the canals both North and South, and on the railways. The words express the experience of the hard, dangerous and poorly paid labor and the cheating that the workers suffered at the hands of storekeepers, timekeepers and straw bosses. Billie McGee died in 1847, and the following year the hapless widower "learned to take his whisky straight." He was left alone, wifeless, with a brood of hungry children to raise. Verse 6 records the anti-Catholic prejudice that the Irish were often victims of at the hands of other workers.

There are many additional verses telling about Pat's life, and here are two:

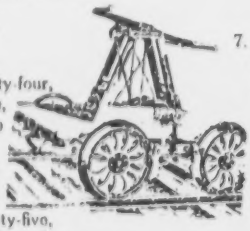
Our boss's name it was Tom King
He kept a store to rob the men,
A yankee clerk with ink and pen
To cheat Pat on the railroad. ch

And when Pat lays him down to slee
The wirey bugs around him creep
And devil a bit can poor Pat sleep
While he works upon the railroad
ch

2. In eighteen hundred and forty-two,
I left the Old World for the New.
Bad cess to the luck that brought me through
To work upon the railway!
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

3. In eighteen hundred and forty-three,
'Twas then I married sweet Billie McGee,
And an elegant wife she's proved to me
For working on the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

4. In eighteen hundred and forty-four,
I landed on Columbia's shore,
I landed on Columbia's shore
To work upon the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.



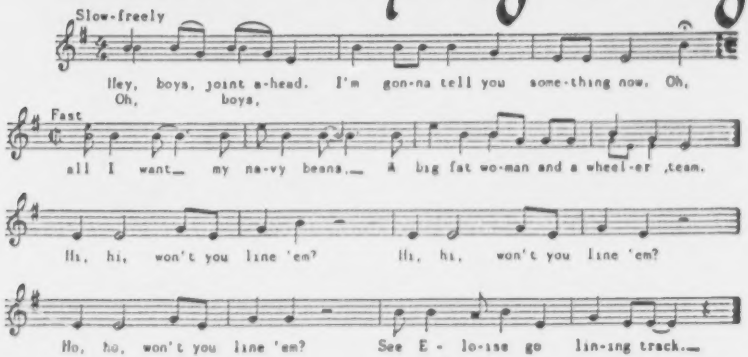
5. In eighteen hundred and forty-five,
I found myself more dead than alive,
I found myself more dead than alive
From working on the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

6. In eighteen hundred and forty-six,
The gang pelted me with stones and sticks,
And then I was in a hell of a fix
To work upon the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

7. In eighteen hundred and forty-seven,
Sweet Billie McGee she went to heaven.
If she left one child she left eleven
To work upon the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

In eighteen hundred and forty-eight,
I learned to take my whisky straight.
Its an elegant drink and can't be beat
For working on the railway.
Fili-me oori-oori-ay, etc.

Track Laying Song


Slow-freely
Hey, boys, joint a-head. I'm gon-na tell you some-thing now. Oh,
Oh, boys,
Fast
all I want my na-vy beans, A big fat wo-man and a wheel-er team.
Hi, hi, won't you line 'em? Hi, hi, won't you line 'em?
Ho, ho, won't you line 'em? See E - lo-ise go lin-ing track.

From *Folk Music of the United States*, Issued from the Collections of the Archive of American Folk Song, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Album 8, "Negro Work Songs and Calls," edited by B. A. Botkin, Record No. 40 B2.

Sung by Allen Prothero at State Penitentiary, Nashville, Tennessee, 1933. Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax.

There is a special kind of song for every job in the South, and on the railroad there is a special kind of song for every job on the railroad. In the railroad songs one finds a sort of tenderness not to be found in other work songs, because these songs are all led by a tender-voiced tenor who is hired to do nothing else but sing, to soothe the men's feelings and keep them all working together so they won't get hurt on the job. . . . [This is the order of work.] About four o'clock in the morning the camp cook goes around the bunk car, banging on a dishpan, and he wakes the men up with a song . . . "Raise up, boys, raise up!" . . . When the men reach the stretch of roadbed they are going to lay track on, they first have to unload the steel rails from the flat cars, and the foreman tells them just how this must be done.

Foreman

Now look here, men, we got a carload of steel to unload here now and this is a ninety-pound steel rail and it's thirty foot long. We don't want to lose nary a finger. 'Course there's plenty more in the market down yonder where them come from, but they don't fit like these. Now, this here's a good way to get a leg broke. It's a good way to get somebody killed, an' every man lifting that rail got to lift it together an' any man lift before I say, "Lift," we're gonna run him away from here. Now git around here, boys, and grab that rail like a cat grabbing a hot hoecake.

Leader

Come on now, boys, gather round.
Bow down, put your glad hands on it.
Raise up! Throw it away!
That's good iron, I heard it ring.

Come on now, boys, come on back now, boys,
Get another one,
Etc.

If I could, I surely would
Stand on the rock where Moses stood,
Oh, boys in the morning,
Hi, hi, a'ternoon,
Hi, boys, in the evening
I'd be standing there all the time.

Oh, boys, want to tell you something now.
Oh, way down yonder in the harvest field,
Angels working at the chariot wheel.
Oh, boys, won't you line 'em, (*Three times*)
See Eloise go lining track.

Oh, if I'd known my cap'n was blind,
Wouldn't went to work till the clock struck nine.
Ho, boys, he can see.
Hi, hi, he ain't blind.
Hi, hi, got a Waterbury.
Hi, hi, he can tell time. . . .

After the rails have been placed on the ties, the next job of the gang is to spike the rails down with their spike-driving hammers, and for this they have their own special song, "O Lulu":

Leader

O Lulu! O gal!
Want to see you so bad.

Group

Gonna see my long-haired babe,
Gonna see my long-haired babe,
O Lawd, I'm going 'cross the water,
See my long-haired babe.

[Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men*, Philadelphia, 1935, pp. 319-321]

After the rails have been spiked down temporarily, the next job is to line the track up, to straighten it so the work train can move on down the line. The song sung with this work is the most widespread of all railroad work songs. The foreman straddles the rail, sights down it to find out where the crooked part is:

Foreman

Look here, fellows, this rail is as crooked as a slavery time fence rail. Now I want you to get this track lined up right now, so get your crow bars on your shoulders and run down about the fourth joint ahead and touch it just a little bit north.

[Here follows "Track Lining Song."]

As the train passes over the new track, gravel is dumped out of the cars and some of the men stay behind to tamp the gravel between the ties—that is, to pack it in tight around the ties so the railroad will not go crooked again—and the foreman hollers to his men to give him the tie-tamping song about "TP and the Morgan":

Foreman

Give us some gravel here, old man, and let's get to tamping those old loose ties down. All right, boys, gather round and get them tampers ready. Don't be afraid to bend your back. We're railroad men! All right, caller, sing about the TP and the Morgan, [which run through Louisiana, where some verses of this song were recorded].

Leader

TP and the Morgan
Standin' side by side.
TP throwed the water,
Water in the Morgan's eye. . . .

Burlington Route
BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD MAINE
DULUTH MISSABE AND IRON RANGE
KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN LINES
K.O. & G.
The New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co.
THE SOUTHERN SR SERVES THE SOUTH

from A Treasury of Railroad Folklore, ed. B.A.Botkin and Alvin F. Harlow. pages 446,447.

A Railroader for Me

As the railroads spread across the country the most impressive figure of all was the engineer. Every country and city boy wanted to grow up to be an engineer, and blow his whistle at every grade crossing. To country girls a railroad engineer was a romantic figure, an heroic, carefree but responsible steady man who would be a good catch.

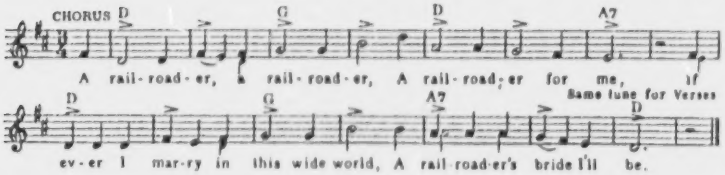
Ballads began to appear about the great iron horse and the railroader became the central figure - earlier songs had praised the charms of sailor, soldier, shantyboy, cowboy.

This song is a derivative of older pieces such as "The Virginia Song," "Soldier Boy for Me."

I would not be a miller who grinds the people's grain,
I'd rather be a soldier boy who walks through wind and rain
ch O soldier boy, a soldier boy, a soldier boy for me,
If ever I get married, a soldier's wife I'll be.

A North Carolina song goes:

A farmer's boy, a farmer's boy, he's the one for me,
If ever I get married, a farmer's bride I'll be.



CHORUS.
A railroader, a railroader,
A railroader for me
If ever I marry in this wide world,
A railroader's bride I'll be.

1 I would not marry a farmer,
He's always in the dirt,
I'd rather marry an engineer
That wears a striped shirt. (CHO.)

2 I would not marry a cowboy,
A-ridin' the western plain,
I'd rather marry an engineer
Who wears a big watch-chain. (CHO.)

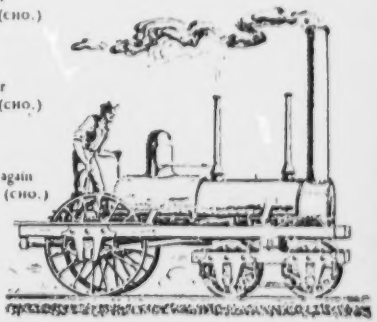
4 I would not marry a sheriff
For he is sure to die,
But I would marry a railroader
Who has them pretty blue eyes. (CHO.)

1 Now I would not marry a blacksmith,
He's always in the black,
I'd rather marry an engineer
That throws the throttle back. (CHO.)

5 I would not marry a preacher,
He preaches too much hell,
But I would marry a railroader
Who rings the engine bell. (CHO.)

6 I would not marry a gambler
Who's always drinkin' wine,
But I would marry a railroader
Who drives the forty-nine. (CHO.)

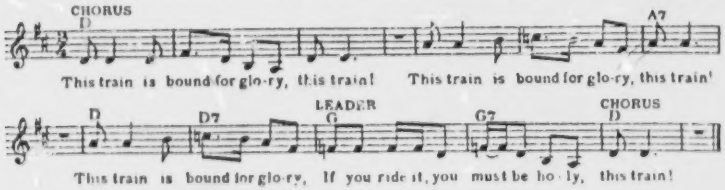
7 Father, oh dear father,
Forgive me if you can,
If you ever see your daughter again
It'll be with a railroad man. (CHO.)



This Train

The railroad left its mark on American religious music -- spirituals and gospel songs. Many of these songs pictured the trains as symbolic vehicles, traveling through the world picking up passengers bound for Heaven. People were warned to be sure to be ready and get on board, for it would come sooner than they expected it. "I'm Going Home on the Morning Train," "This Train," "Little Black Train A-coming," "Git on Board Little Children," "Gospel Train," and "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad" are some examples.

This Train, bound straight for Heaven and glory, is a special train, and it only carries holy people; there is no room aboard it for whiskey drinkers, jazz dancers, gamblers, or other sinners.



1 This train is bound for glory, this train! (2)
This train is bound for glory,
If you ride it, you must be holy, this train!

2 This train don't pull no gamblers, this train! (2)
This train don't pull no gamblers,
Neither don't pull no midnight ramblers, this train!

3 This train don't pull no jokers, this train! (2)
This train don't pull no jokers,
Cigarette pullers and cigar smokers, this train!

4 This train don't pull no dancers, this train! (2)
This train don't pull no dancers,
Hootchie-cootch shakers and Charleston prancers, this train!

5 This train don't pull no extras, this train! (2)
This train don't pull no extras,
Don't pull nothin' but the Heavenly Special, this train!

Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow continued from page 7

The railroad has been for these people both villain and hero. Sometimes it was—

There's many a man been murdered by the railroad, railroad, railroad,
There's many a man been murdered by the railroad
And laid in his lonesome grave.

And sometimes it was—

Here she comes, look at her roll,
Ridin' those rails, eatin' that coal,
Like a hound waggin' its tail.
Dallas bound, bound, bound,
It's the fireball mail.

They made scores of ballads about wrecks and heroic engineers who stuck to their throttles till the end, just as their ancestors had heroized the gallant captains who stayed with their ships until they went down. The hoboes who rode the rods beneath the cars and the blinds between the cars made a whole literature of ballads and poems about their wandering lives. The blues blowers and the hillbilly yodelers have laid down a line of railroad ballads, which, strung together, would cover as much territory as the Santa Fe.

900 Miles

This railroad song is a favorite of Southern mountain banjo pickers and harmonica players. It has more titles than stanzas - Reuben Blue, Train '45, Reuben's Train, Old Reuben, 500 Miles are a few. Little is known about Old Reuben except that he was an engineer. There is no sound in America so heart rending and hair-rising as a train whistle at night. Most instrumental versions imitate the mournful whistle of the train with long drawn-out shrill notes. Woodie Guthrie used to play it with "an eight-wheel driver rhythm coming out of it."

As you sing it, you feel a loneliness, and an ache for home welling out of your wnole body. It's a siren song for distant places and the lure of the railroad that could carry you to new opportunities in faroff cities and states across the mountains and deserts of our country.

Traditional
dm
gm
Well I'm walk-ing down the track, I've got tears in my eyes...
Try-'n to read a let-ter from my home...
If that train runs me right I'll be
home 'fore to-mor-row night.... 'cause I'm nine hun-dred miles
from my home..... And I
hate to hear that lone-some whis-tle blow.....

Well, I'll pawn you my watch
And I'll pawn you my chain
I'll pawn you my gold diamond ring
If that train runs me right,
I'll be home 'fore tomorrow night,
'Cause I'm nine hundred miles from my home
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow

Well this train I ride on
Is a hundred coaches long
Hear the whistle blow a hundred miles
If that train runs me right,
I'll be home 'fore tomorrow night
'Cause I'm nine hundred miles from my home
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow

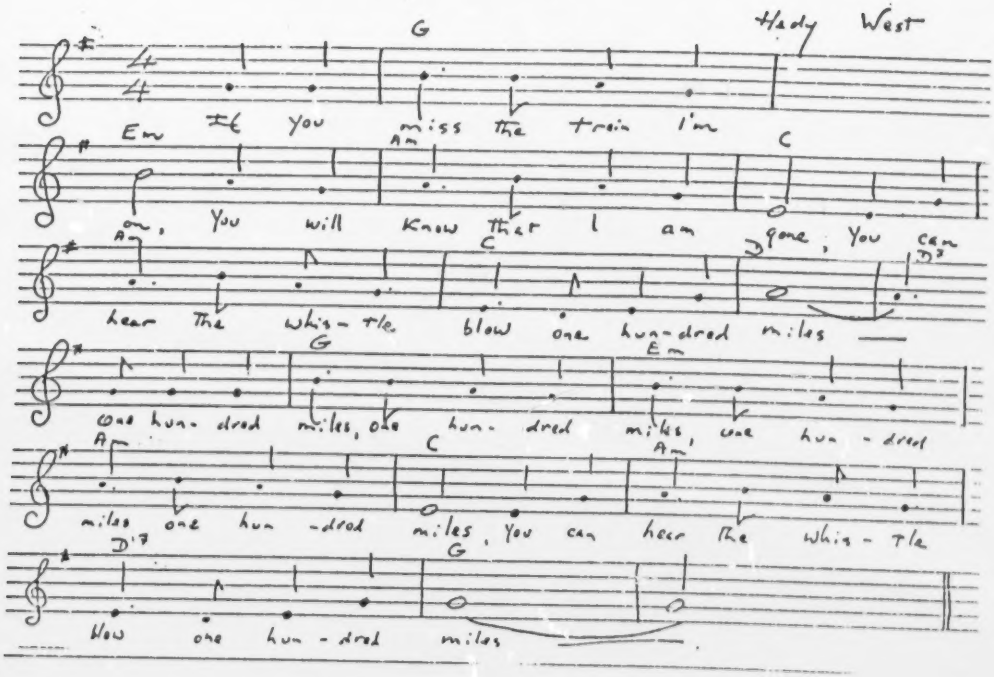
Engineer's Verse

If my woman says so,
I'll railroad no more
I'll sidetrack my train and go home
If that wheeler runs me right
I'll be home 'fore tomorrow night,
'Cause I'm nine hundred miles from my home
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow

from Samuel L. Forcucci, A Folk Song History of America.

This song comes in many versions. On the next page we reproduce one with lyrics from the Great Depression and melody by Hedy West. Many songs do not vanish; each generation receives them and reworks them, adding new words to reflect its own special experience. "500 Miles" is a good example. Here the railroad provides a backdrop for the homesickness of a penniless wanderer.

500 Miles

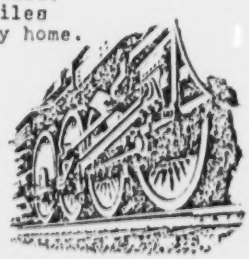

Hedy West
G
Em If you miss the train I'm
Am C
on, You will know that I am
Am C D7 D7
gone, You can hear the whis-tle blow one hun-dred miles
G Em
One hun-dred miles, one hun-dred miles, one hun-dred
Am C Am
miles one hun-dred miles, You can hear the whis-tle
D7 G
Blow one hun-dred miles

If you miss the train I'm on,
You will know that I am gone,
You can hear the whistle blow one hundred miles;
One hundred miles, one hundred miles,
One hundred miles, one hundred miles,
You can hear the whistle blow one hundred miles.

Lord, I'm one, Lord, I'm two,
Lord, I'm three, Lord, I'm four,
Lord, I'm five hundred miles from my home;
Five hundred miles, five hundred miles,
Five hundred miles, five hundred miles
Lord I'm five hundred miles from my home.

Not a shirt on my back,
Not a penny to my name,
Lord, I can't go home thisaway;
Thisaway, thisaway,
Thisaway, thisaway,
Lord, I can't go home thisaway.

repeat first verse



Casey Jones

A famous engineer was Casey Jones. Born in 1864 John Luther Jones, he took his name ffom the little town of Cayce, Ky where he was born. Casey started working for the railroads in his teens, first as a janitor, then on a switching crew, then loading livestock, then as messenger, brakeman, fireman and finally as engineer. His three younger brothers were also engineers.

In 1886 Casey married his boarding house keeper's daughter, Jane Brady. In January 1900 at the age of 26 he took over the Illinois Central's famous train from Chicago to New Orleans. Casey had the 190 miles run between Memphis and Canton.

Casey was an outstanding engineer with an almost perfect record, but he did love speed. His whistle was his trademark. In those days engineers were allowed to instal whatever kind of whistle they wished. His was a homemade chime instrument formed by six slender tubes banded together, the smallest being just half as long as the tallest. Up and down the Delta Casey's whistle was known by one and all. A conductor described it as "a kind of drawn-out note, beginning softly, then rising, then dying away to almost a whisper."

And the switchman knew by the
engine's moan
That the man at the throttle was
Casey Jones.

If Casey had been a slowdriving, cautious engineer the wreck would probably not have taken place. Casey died because he loved to travel fast and because of his unselfishness and good nature. He came off his regular run with the northbound Cannonball at 10 p.m. at Memphis. The engineer on the southbound run that night was sick. Casey and his fireman Sim Webb offered without rest or sleep to fill in and take the southern run. Their engine #382 had to be conditioned and made ready for the trip while Casey and Sim took time out for food and coffee.

On the morn of April 30, 1906 he pulled the six-car train of mail, baggage, coaches and sleepers out of the station. A slow spring rain was falling.

Already 95 minutes late, Casey started making up time, determined to get his train on schedule. He had nearly caught up as his train approached Vaughan MS 175 miles south of Memphis At Vaughan had been sidetracked to let Casey go by, but the last 4 cars with the caboose were still sticking on on the main line. The crew of this train planned to let the Cannonball pass by the front end of their train, then pull back onto the main line dragging the freight cars out of Casey's way at the far end. Warning torpedoes to slow him down had been placed upon the track a half mile up the line.

But Casey was running too a fast. He tried to slow down from 70 m.p.h. to about 30, but he couldn't stop. His fireman (who was Black) yelled to him to jump, but Casey threw on the emergency brakes, "You jump, I'll stay," he told Sim.

Sim jumped and was saved,
Casey stayed and was killed.

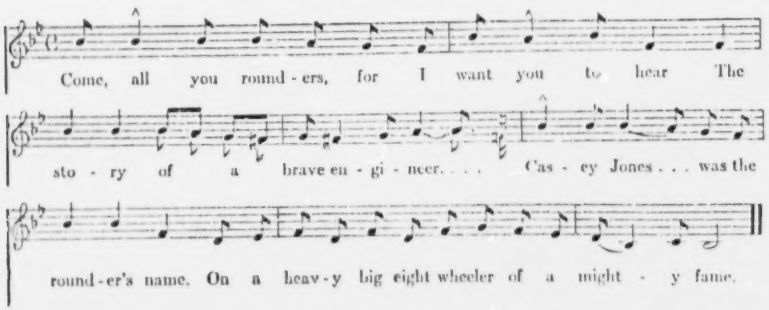
Sim remembers that the last thing he heard as he jumped was Casey giving one final pull on his beloved whistle. Casey was the only one killed in the wreck, nobody else was seriously injured. Casey died to protect crew and passengers; his body was found lying in the wreck.

It's believed that Wallace Aunders, engine wiper in the roundhouse, took an old ballad and made it over. But nine years after Casey's death, two vaudevillians, T. Lawrence Seibert and Eddie Newton, published their version of Casey Jones ("taken from an old Negro ballad") and it swept the nation.

While the vaudevillians borrowed from older oral traditions, their song was followed by a number of parodies and related songs from Joe Hill's railroad strike song, through a miner's song, an air force parody, a soldier's song, a political satire about FDR, a KKK song and even a Free Speech Movement song. Few

American ballads provide us with such striking evidence of the interaction between folk and pop tradition as does "Casey Jones." We take this version from the great American poet, Carl Sandburg, American Songbag.

CASEY JONES


Come, all you round - ers, for I want you to hear The
sto - ry of a brave en - gi - neer. . . . Cas - ey Jones . . . was the
round - er's name. On a heav - y big eight wheeler of a might - y fame.

2 Caller called Casey 'bout half-past four,
He kissed his wife at the station door,
Climbed to the cab with the orders in his hand,
He says, "This is my trip to the holy land."

3 Out of South Memphis yard on the fly,
Heard the fireman say, "You got a white eye."
Well, the switchmen knew by the engine moan
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

4 The rain was comin' down five or six weeks.
The railroad track was like the bed of a creek.
They slowed her down to a thirty mile gait
And the south-bound mail was eight hours late.

5 Fireman says, "Casey, you're runnin' too fast,
You run that block board the last station you passed."
Casey says, "I believe we'll make it though,
For she steams a lot better than I ever know."

6 Casey says, "Fireman, don't you fret,
Keep knockin' at the fire door, don't give up yet,
I'm going to run her till she leaves the rail,
Or make it on time with the south-bound mail."

7 Around the curve and down the dump,
Two locomotives was a bound to jump,
Fireman hollered, "Casey, it's just ahead,
We might jump and make it but we'll all be dead."

8 Around the curve comes a passenger train,
Casey blows the whistle, tells the fireman, "Ring the bell
Fireman jumps and says "Good-by,
Casey Jones You're bound to die."

9 Well Casey Jones was all right.
He stuck to his duty day and night
They loved his whistle and his ring number three,
And he came into Memphis on the old I. C.

10 Fireman goes down the depot track,
Begging his honey to take him back,
She says, "Oranges on the table, peaches on the shelf,
You're a goin' to get tired sleepin' by yourself."

Wabash Cannonball

The Industrial Revolution that hit the United States after the War of 1812 presented urban workers with chronic periods of depression, in which they were laid off from factories, jobless and hungry. They took to the roads to go some place else in search of work. With the rise of the transcontinental railroads after the Civil War the hobo developed complexity as a social type. Defined as "a migratory worker or a professional tramp" the hobo became a national figure. Now he traveled coast to coast following the crops and working the harvests, looking for jobs and, if he could not find them, living as a semi-outcast on the fringes of bourgeois society. "The Wabash Cannon Ball" is a hobo's song; it tells of a mythical train that takes the hobo wherever he wants to go.

G
I stood on the At-lan- tic o-cean, On the wide Pa- ci- fic
C D7
shore, Heard the Queen of flow-ing moun-tains to the South Belle by the
G
door. She's long, ta-l and hand-some, she's loved by one and
C D7
all. She's a mod-ern com-bin- a- tion called the Wa-bash Can- non-
G Chos C
ball. Lis-ten to the jin-gle, The rum-ble and the roar.
D7 G
Rid-ing thru the wood-lands, to the hill and by the shore. Hear the
C
might-y rush of en-gines, Hear the lone-some ho-bo squall,
D7 G
Rid-ing thru the jan-gles on the Wa- bash Can- non - ball.

This train she runs to Quincy, Monroe, and Mexico,
She runs to Kansas City, and she's never running slow;
She runs right into Denver, and she makes an awfull squall.
They all know by that whistle it's the Wabash Cannonball.
There are other cities, pardner, that you can go to see—
St. Paul and Minneapolis, Ashtabula, Kankakee
The lakes of Minnehaha, where the laughing waters fall—
We reach them by no other but the Wabash Cannonball.

Now listen to her rumble, now listen to her roar,
As she echoes down the valley and tears along the shore.
Now hear the engine's whistle and her mighty hoboes' call
As we ride the rods and brakebeams on the Wabash Cannonball.
Now here's to Long Slim Perkins, may his name forever stand.
He'll be honored and respected by the 'boes throughout the land.
And when his days are over and the curtains round him fall,
We'll ship him off to hell and on the Wabash Cannonball.

The Workingman's Train

THE WORKINGMANS' TRAIN.

BY E. R. PLACE.

(Tune:—*Old Dan Tucker.*)

Ho, the car Emancipation
Leaves, to-day, Industrial Station,
Bearing on its train of treasures
Labor's hopes in labor measures.
CHORUS:—Get all aboard,
Get all aboard,
Get all aboard, leave your plunder,
Get off the track or you'll fall under.

Tracks of scheming politician
Are but railroads to perdition;
Civil Service not our freight, sir,
Banks and tariffs, let them wait, sir
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Harkye, Dives, Dick and Harry,
Come and view the freight we carry,
Blessings in all forms and guises,
Life, with all its joyful prizes.
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Leisure for the weary masses,
Work enough, no idle classes,
Time to think, sleep, rest or dance, sir,
Joy of living to enhance, sir.
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Wages now to needs uplifted,
Thoughts refined and wants well sifted,
Homes made shrines of sweet communion,
Circles knit in love's bright union.
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Want and crime and vice's blight, sir,
Vanish in the growing light, sir;
Woe of penury, curse of riches,
Cease to plough their miry ditches.
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Children happy, mothers' faces
Fresh and joyful as the graces;
Fathers, freed from slavery blightful,
Make the home spent hours delightful.
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

Ho, the car Emancipation
Bears the seeds of all salvation;
Wise men hail it, fools impede it,
Truth and Justice cry, "God speed it."
CHO.—Get all aboard, &c.

A broadside variant of "The Workingman's Train." Courtesy of Brown University Library

Railroad workers like other working people were involved in often bitter struggles to organize trade unions and to win a higher standard of life. These Unions were railroad "brotherhoods" for the skilled workers, and also the famous American Railroad Union organized upon an industrial basis to include all workers in the railroad industry.

The Workingman's Train arose from the railroad union struggle of 1877 and it expresses well the workingman's vision of the better life for the sake of which he is prepared to sacrifice and to struggle.

For the melody the the author of the song took Old Dan Tucker, a widely loved old time song composed by an Irishman, Dan Emmett.

John Henry

We could not close any discussion of the railroad or of folk songs without the story and song of one of the greatest folk heroes. The great ballad of John Henry celebrates a railroad worker, a Black man who met his death while working in the Big Bend Tunnel on the Chesapeake and Ohio (C & O) railroad around the year 1873.

The Greenbriar River in mountainous West Virginia bends sharply southward and meanders through the countryside for about 10 miles, then returning to a point only a little more than a mile from the beginning of the bend. The railroad engineers were faced with the alternatives of either following the river or tunneling a mile and a half through the mountain. They decided to tunnel, beginning in early 1870. Late in 1872 the shaft was completed, track laid, and the first train passed through. The Big Bend Tunnel was one of the longest most difficult tunnels ever cut through a mountain. Almost one thousand workers, mostly Black, were employed during its construction.

John Henry was a steel driver. His hammer blows drove the steel drill into the rocks to make holes for the blasting charges. "He was a steel driving man, Lord, Lord." His assistant, the "shaker," held long steel drill, turning it slightly at every stroke to shake out the loose dirt from the hole, and to keep the drill from becoming dull -- the way you rotate a pencil to keep the point sharp. When the hole reached the required depth, the drill was removed, the men moved back, a charge of dynamite was inserted and set off. Then the loose dirt and the rock were shovelled out, and the drilling and hammering began all over again.

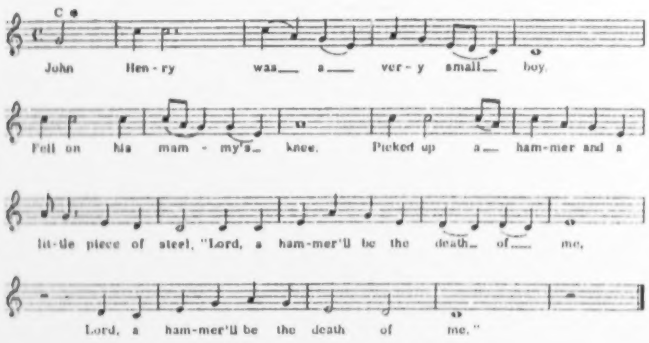
The railroad company decided to experiment with the use of an automatic steam-driven drill, which they believed could do more work than a man, and at half the cost. John Henry challenged this drill to a contest. Told that his muscles and spirit can be replaced by a machine, he takes a great line from the Scottish poet Robert Burns. "A man's a man for a' that," he says. In the ensuing dramatic encounter John Henry gives his all. He beats the machine, but the effort is so great that he also gives his life.

> John Henry was hammering on the mountain,
> And his hammer was striking fire;
> He drove so hard til he broke his poor heart,
> And he laid down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord;
> He laid down his hammer and he died.

John Henry was one of many workers who gave their lives in these tunnels. Tunnel work was very dangerous. Cave-ins, dust, lack of fresh air, falling rock, an inferno of heat, premature dynamite blasts took a daily toll. We have no records of casualties in the Big Bend Tunnel, but the Hoosac Tunnel in Massachusetts was being built at the same time. A local newspaper reported on December 7, 1873 that "136 men have been killed in its construction." Pete Sanders gave this account of the Big Bend:

"I didn't drive no steel in Big Bend Tunnel. Uncle Jeff and Eleck did though. They said Big Bend was a terrible - like place, and many men got killed there. And they throwed the dead men and mules all together there in that fill between the mountains. "

The song traveled to all parts of the country and there are many variants with hundreds of verses. Basically they all tell the same story.


John Hen - ry was a ver - y small boy.
Fell on his mam - my's knee. Picked up a ham-mer and a
lit-tle piece of steel, "Lord, a ham-mer'll be the death of me,
Lord, a ham-mer'll be the death of me."

John Henry was a very small boy,
Fell on his mammy's knee,
Picked up a hammer and a little piece of steel,
"Lord, a hammer'll be the death of me,
Lord, a hammer'll be the death of me."

John Henry went upon the mountain,
Come down on the side,
The mountain so tall, John Henry was so small,
Lord, he lay down his hammer and he cried, "Oh, Lord,"
He lay down his hammer and he cried.

John Henry was on the right hand,
But that steam drill was on the left,
"Before your steam drill beats me down,
Hammer my fool self to death,
Lord, I'll hammer my fool self to death."

The captain says to John Henry,
"Believe my tunnel's fallin' in."
"Captain, you needn't not to worry,
Just my hammer hawsing in the wind,
Just my hammer hawsing in the wind."

"Look away over yonder, captain,
You can't see like me."
He hollered out in a low, lonesome cry,
"This hammer'll be the death of me,
Lord, this hammer'll be the death of me."

John Henry told his captain,
"Captain, you go to town,
Bring John back a twelve-pound hammer,
And he'll whup your steam drill down,
[?And] he'll whup your steam drill down."

For the man that invented that steam drill
Thought he was mighty fine,
John Henry sunk a fo'teen foot,
The steam drill only made nine,
The steam drill only made nine.

John Henry told his shaker,
"Shaker, you better pray,
For if I miss this six-foot steel,
Tomorrow'll be your buryin' day,
An' tomorrow'll be your buryin' day."

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RCA Victor LPV 532, The Railroad In Folklore. Edited by Archie Green.

Vetco LP 103, Songs of the Railroad. with notes by Bob Hyland.

Mark 56 794, Railroad Songs Featuring Vernon Dalhart.

Columbia CL 2686/ CS 9486, Hear The Whistles Blow.

Folkways Records FA 2013 (FP)13 900 Miles & Other Railroad Songs. Sung by Cisco Houston, 1953.

Collector Records 1924, Singing BRAC by Joe Glazer, 1975.

Collector Records 1925, Union Train by Joe Glazer.

FOLKTALES TO READ TO YOUR STUDENTS ---Upper elementary and Jr & Sr High

Harold Felton, John Henry & His Hammer illustrated by Alden Watson--superb.

Maria Leach, The Rainbow Book of American Folktales & Legends - an outstanding book. A must book for the desk of every teacher. In addition to all the famous folk heroes and heroines, contains folklore material on all of the states.

Anne Malcolmson, Yankee Doodle's Cousins illustrated by Robert McCloskey.-- another delightful book- you'll love it.

Irving Shapiro's, Heroes In American Folklore illus by Donald McKay & James Dougherty

For younger children--Adrien Stoutenberg, American Tall Tales & Adele DeLeeun, John Henry-Steel-Driving Man

****** ****** ****** *****

Two Books We Forgot to Include in Last Issue Animal Songs Bibliography

Tom Person, Sedge Hill Settler --Story of a boy, his father and his dog whom they wish to train as a hunting dog.

Emily Neville, It's Like This Cat -A Newberry Winner Book- Describe's a boy's relationship with his father.

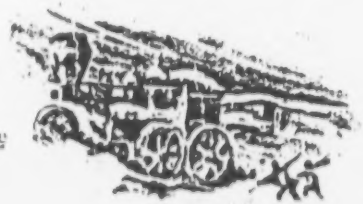
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDENTS

Primary

Broekel, Ray, Trains
Hartwick, Harry, The Runaway Ride of Old 88
Norling, Josephine, Pogo's Train Ride
Pierce, Jack, The Freight Train Book
Scarry, Huck, Steam Train Journey (also for elementary grades)
Verleyen, Cyriel, The First Train
Wooley, Catherine, I Like Trains

Elementary

Bland, Edith (Nesbit) Railway Children
Browne, David, Usborne Guide to Model Railways
Broekel, Ray, Trains
Buehl, Walter, Railroads, Today and Yesterday
Colby, Caroll, Railroads, U.S.A.
Eltins, Mary, All Aboard! The Railraods That Built America
Feldman, Anne, The Railroad Book: Trains In America
Clyman, Eleanor, Engine Number Seven
De Angeli, Marguerite, Whistle For the Crossing
Cague, James, When the Rails Ran West
Hamilton, Russell, First Book of Trains
Herde, D.J., Model Railroads
Nauarra, John, Supertrains
Pierce, Jack, The FReight Train Book
Roberts, David, The Great Book of Railways
Sattler, Helen, Train Whistles: A Language In Code
Wooley, Catherine, Railroad Cowboy
Zaffo, George, Big Book of Real Trains



Secondary

Berry, Erick, Whistle Round the Bend
Beebe, Lucius, High Iron
Brown, Dee, Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow
Burt, Olive, The Story of American Railroads & How They Helped Build A Nation
Henry, Robert, Portrait of the Iron Horse
Hogg, Gary, Union Pacific: The Building of the First Transcontinental Railroad
Holbrook, Stewart, The Golden Age of Railroads
Johnson, Enid, Rails Across the Continent
McCready, Albert, Railroads In The Days of Steam: American Heritage Book
Nathan, Adele, The Building of the First Transcontinental Railroad
Snow, Richard, The Iron Road: A Portrait of American Railroading
Weiss, Harvey, How To Run A Railroad Model Train
Yepsan, Roger, Train Talk: An Illustrated Guide To Lights, Hand Signals, Whist
Zachary, Harry, Model Railroading

A fine book for all grades is Ruth Crawford Seeger's Let's Build A Railroad. Contains simple pictures by Tom Funk and is a songbook about the different stages of building a railroad. Songs have both piano and guitar arrangements. A fine unit for social studies and language development. From this you could also develop ideas for grouping of other occupations and industries and folk songs. Some of the songs are: Ten Pound Hammer, Hammer Ring, Tie Tamping Song, John Henry, Train Is A-Coming and The Little Black Train.

Follow-up Ideas for Your Students

1/ Students can build model railroad cars and a railroad layout.

2/ On a map of U.S. and Canada students can draw in the major transcontinental railroads that were built.

3/ On a state map have students locate and draw in the railroads that used to operate in their state.

4/ Invite in someone who works for a railroad to talk about his job.

5/ Contact a railroad model club in your area and ask them to come in with some of their models and talk to your class.

6/ Railroad buffs have restored to life some steam engine and tracks. See if your class can take a trip on one near you

7/ Even today railroads carry much heavy freight throughout our country. Have students make a list of products and materials that are still carried by trains. Have them make a product map indicating the original source from which the goods are shipped.

8/ Read the legend of John Henry to your c lass, and teach them the song. Then have students do a mural portraying important events in his story.

9/ After learning the song Casey Jones each student might be asked to react and express in any creative way -- sculpture, dance, song, painting, poem, needlecraft, puppet show -- his/her feelings about Casey Jones as a hero.

10/ Compare railroads with other modern means of travel - travel time, expense, ecology - list reasons for supporting and reviving railroad travel.

11/ Design some quilt patterns on the theme of railroad songs. Perhaps each child might create and sew a quilt block on a phase of the railroad. Then the class could sew all the blocks together to make a quilt.

12/ Have students write an "eyewitness account" of John Henry's contest with the steam drill to be read on the 6 o' clock news.

13/ All locomotives were given their own names. Have students do research and see how many names they can come up with, e.g., Peter Cooper's Tom Thumb. They were also named after famous people, states, towns, rivers, animals, and for their speed and strength.

14/ Make a list of all railroad words/terms that your students can discover. Make a dictionary illustrating each word with a drawing or cutout picture -- caboose, engine, conductor, porter, fireman, boxcar.

FOLKSONG RECORDS&CASSETTES REVIEWS

This issue we'd like to call our readers' attention to records and cassettes produced by four of our subscribers.

Keith and Rusty McNeil have started a new series, Insights Into American History Through Folksong. So far, two volumes have been issued. The first covers The Industrial Revolution and the Labor Movement from the 1860's to the 1980's. The second volume presents The American R*volution, Colonial Times and the War of 1812.

The cassettes include folksongs and supplementary comments by the McNeils to provide a comprehensive historical and social background of each era. Each volume includes two stereo cassettes and notes on the songs. Many familiar and beloved songs are presented, arranged in a chronological time sequence. These cassettes are a valuable tool for teachers.

Keith & Rusty perform a variety of songstyles and play over 30 different instruments. They are available for performances at schools and colleges.

They have also produced a stereo record of traditional and contemporary folksongs about pollution and ecology entitled Where Will The Children Play? Available from Keith & Rusty McNeil c/o W&M Records 16230 Van Buren Blvd. Riverside, CA 92504 (714) 780-2322

****

The second person is Tom Calliman, former teacher and now fulltime professional songwriter and folksinger. His cassette is Go To Sea Once More by the Morgans, a singing group. It contains lovely, rousing renditions of 15 chanties, fishing and whaling songs, including Greenland Whale Fisheries, Blow Ye Winds in the Morning. Available from The Morgans c/o Tom Calliman 168 Shore Rd., Clinton CT 06413.

The Morgans are also in the process of producing an education album devoted to the 100 year transformation in Connecticut from hunters to conservationists as regards the whale. The record will be split between whale hunting songs of a century ago to original songs celebrating the whale in light of its endangered condition. It will also include historical notes to the songs and the past involvement of Ct. citizens in the whaling issue. For further information, contact Tom.

****

The third of our cassettes is by a Canadian folksinger born in Texas. George Lyon now lives in Calgary, Alberta and presents programs in schools and libraries, teaches music and is a music historian. Appropriately, George has made a cassette tape of traditional cowboy songs called Blood On The Saddle. George accompanies himself on a guitar, harmonica, mandolin, button accordian and various banjos and sings the songs in an authentic manner. It is a fine teaching tool to introduce some cowboy songs into your classroom. Priced at $10,which includes postage, the tape is available from Stringsong REcords 215-9th Avenue NW Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2M 0B2

****

BOOK REVIEWS

Samuel L. Forcucci, A Folk Song History of America: America Through Its Songs. Prentice-Hall paperback, 1984.

Sam Forcucci's paperback is a real resource for the teacher's shelf. It includes useful songs with lyrics, music and chords, on the following topics:

American REvolution
Pioneers
Southern Mountains
Blacks
Sailors
Civil War
Cowboys
Railroaders

In addition the author provides commentary and background of help in using the songs effectively in class. Most of the selections are good; the cowboy section, for some reason, is weak. There is no bibliography. Definitely recommended.

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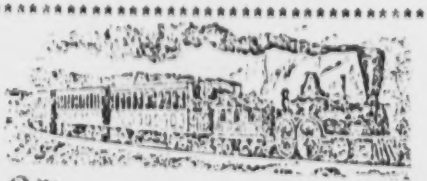

BOOK REVIEWS (continued)

B. Lee Cooper . Popular Music Handbook
Libraries Unlimited, P.O. Box 263
Littleton, Colorado 1984 441 p.

It is Cooper's aim to foster reading,writing, research and teaching about popular music.(blues, disco, country, rock, folk, big band, etc.).

His book is designed to enable teachers to energize classroom discussion and stimulate critical thinking with an exciting, though nontraditional, teaching resource: popular music, used in the classroom as a medium for exploring contemporary life. Twenty-eight teaching units -- each consisting of a central issue for classroom investigation, a designated teaching strategy, a group of theme-related songs or record albums, and a group of theme-related literary supplements -- are developed.The author, a Professor of History at Newberry College , South Carolina, provides resource lists that will help teachers, librarians and media specialists in their search for popular music materials.

This is an excellent bibliographic tool with an education focus that should be in every school library for use by teachers from upper elementary grades through college.

****

RICH SOURCE OF CANADIAN MUSIC

The Canadian Folk Music Society Spring 1985 mail-order catalogue contains a listing of over 250 albums, books and cassettes of Canadian folk music and traditional folksong. It is the first time Canadian folk music materials have been made available from a single source.

The catalogue is $2 which will be refunded on your first order from the catalogue. Send to Canadian Folk Music Society P.O. Box 4232, Station C Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2T 5N1.Also inquire about membership in CFMS.

****

GAME CATALOGUE

Another catalogue we'd like to call your attention to is a bit outside the folk song area. But we found it so interesting, we thought our readers would like to know about it. It's a catalogue

& CATALOGUES & RESOURCES

of co-operative and non-competitive board games (and other games), books, playthings and puzzles about Mother Nature, social wellbeing and peaceful living. It's free from Animal Town Game Company, P.O. Box 2002, Santa Barbara, California 93120.

****

A CURRICULUM GUIDE ON SOUTH AFRICA

Strangers In Their Own Land by
William Bigelow

Strangers In Their Own Land introduces students and teachers to the lives and struggles of the people of South Africa. Designed as a manual for teachers, the book incorporates short stories, poems, role plays, simulations, news articles and histrocial readings to reveal unfloding drama in Southern Africa. Available from Africa World Pres P.O. Box 1892 Trenton, New Jersey 08608

****

INEXPENSIVE SONGBOOKS

A fine, pocketsized booklet, Songs To Sing and Sing Again" by Shelley Gordon has been issued containing over a hundred and fifty folksongs for groups of all ages. With many years of song leadership behind her, Shelley has guidelines for leaders of group singing. It sells for $2.95 and is available in Canada from Shelley Gordon 25 Beilsize Drive Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4S 1L3.

The World Around Songs, headed by Nancy Cope, has the above booklet also- is its co-pubisher. They have also issued another entertaining, inexpensive pocket-size booklet, Bright Morning Stars:Songs From the Country. 92 songs enlivened with many illustrations.

If you are not familiar with World Around Songs. it's time that you were. They are a marvelous source of small pocketbooks only 3½" x 6¼". Each contains words and music to hundreds of folksongs from all over the globe. Send for their free catalogue: World Around Songs, Inc. Route 5 Burnsville, North Carolina 28714.

****

FREE MATERIALS -- NEW AND OLD

#40 - Jimmie Rodgers: From Folk Song To Commercial Country by James Akenson (see page 3 of this issue) 2 22¢ stamps

#41 - Assorted lesson plans for lumbering songs, Jam on Gerry's Rock and Lumberman's Alphabet. Two-22¢ stamps

#42 - Folk Songs As Historical Literature for Young People by Tony Scott 16 pages. This is a reprint of an article that Tony prepared for a literary magazine put out by two English teachers at Brooklyn College. It's a clear, vivid and stirring account of the importance of folksongs as a part ,indeed bedrock, of our literary heritage. If you wish, Tony would be glad to have you reproduce this for your faculty or students. Two-22¢ sta

The previously issued 39 free materials are all still available. To order, see previous Volumes, especially #1, Volume IV, Songs of Women, which lists all of the first 35 items.

To cover printing, handling and mailing costs, we ask that for any 1 to 15 articles, you send us two 22¢ stamps for each article. For 16 to all 40 articles, send one 22¢ stamp for each article ordered(or pay by check)

Please do not send stamped envelope Some articles are 2-3 pages, others 12-20 pages. When we make up your or we will provide the right size wrappe

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Here are the names and addresses of colleagues. Please send them a free copy.

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FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM

A NETWORK OF TEACHERS OF HISTORY, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND THE HUMANITIES - A NEWSLETTER

Editors
§John A. Scott
Fieldston School
(New York)
& Rutgers University
(New Jersey)
§Laurence I. Seidman
C. W. Post Center, Long Island University
(New York)

all communications to
Laurence I. Seidman
140 Hill Park Avenue
Great Neck, N.Y. 11021
516 466-8546

Advisory Panel
Sandy Behrend, *Art Teacher* (New Jersey)
Bill Bonyan, *Folksinger* (Maine)
Anna Fulhart, *Elementary School Teacher* (Indiana)
Jenny Vincent Welles, *Hispanic Folk Music Resource Person* (New Mexico)
J. Calvin Holsinger, *Evangel College of Arts and Sciences* (Missouri)

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FUTURE ISSUES --- YOUR HELP REQUESTED--- The third issue for this school year, deadline April, to come out in May, will be devoted to songs that tell about war , the agonies of war and the desire for peace as expressed by people in their songs through the ages. Do you know any anti-war songs from the past? Please send along a copy for us to consider publishing, with a brief explanation of where it comes from and how you learned it. Are there antiwar or peace organizations in your area, state, that provide lesson plans and other materials for classroom use? Please send us information.

Our first issue for Volume VII will be devoted to "Teaching Our Democratic Constitution Through Songs" to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, 1987-8. If you have any thouhts or experiences of teaching the Constitution and the Bill of Rights or the great Wartime Ammendments with song, please pass them along to us. We welcome your partficipation in your newsletter.

In November 1986, at the NCSS conference in New York City, we hope to offer a workshop on this theme using songs from all periods of U.S. History that illuminate the innermeaning of the Constitution. We are also ready to travel and to present workshops in your neck of the woods-at your Conference Days-for all grade levels. Contact Laurie for rates and further information.

Liz Finlayson 3804 East 58th St.
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135

My enthusiasm is at its height! I've found friends, besides material. Ella Jenkins is my mentor- I learned from her when I started all this 15 years ago. Also, Ruth Seeger's book, American Folk Songs for Children provided material for workshops I've conducted. I recommend her book as a starting place. Mitzi Collins inspired me at an early childhood national convention. Her 'trotting horse' is the climax of my presentation (after the clogging wooden dolls). I could go on and on - that's what 'folk' is all about, learning from others.

I thought I was alone on a desert! Thanks to the local Arts and Humanities Council, I've had my work 'dignified'- I'm listed with 113 other presentations (including opera, ballet, visual artists, etc.) offered to 7 area schools districts. I've never had such a busy schedule!

My background was secondary English but I started volunteering as a pupil aide in disadvantaged schools. A principal suggested I do music at several levels. I worked up my presentation as 'Grandma Guitar" and after 8 years at one school, I was asked to go city-wide through the Community Resource Program. I limit my work to early childhood - pre$, K thru 3. What I am doing, classroom teachers could do. I try to subtly inspire them. I don't have a "good voice", nor play the guitar that well (kids relate to it, that's why I start with it) but anyone can play an Autoharp which I also use.(We have been giving free lessons to teachers for 14 years on Autoharp).

The more I'm scheduled, the more I know how much much these children are missing! It's exciting to know others in these United States feel the same way - and are doing something about it.

I attended a workshop given by Sharon, Lois and Bram, professional folk entertainers for children. Bram is a former teacher in Canada who left the profession to devote himself to sharing a heritage with the young who don't know theirs--says it's his mission. It's mine,too! And an activity every single child --gifted, normal, physically or mentally handicapped--can participate in. I've even worked in a preschool for deaf children--and been asked back several times. It's worth it to see their faces!

****

Peter Lawrence 1542 Ascension Drive
San Mateo, California 94402

I saw your article in Social Education.The issue came the same day I took my guitar into my U.S. History class and sang songs of the Irish immigrants from the 1800's. What a great day it turned out to be--students were excited. And I found out that someone has been doing what I've really wanted to have and use -- folk music in the classroom!

I'm starting an interest group with two other teachers at my high school.

****

Anne Custer 19 Arenta Avenue
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

I read of your program in the most recent NCSS Social Education magazine. I must tell you I was really excited to see that someone had developed a program that uses folksong. I've been doing a little bit as far as using music in the classroom, but it's been bits and pieces. Thanks!

****

Andy Darrow 137 Camino del Sol
Santa Cruz, California 95065

I truly enjoyed your article in the October 1985 issue of Social Education. You may be pleased to know that I presented several folksongs and their historical context to one of the teaching credential classes I am in at San Jose State University after reading your article. My goal was to get people excited about music in the classroom. That was a week ago. People from the class still come up to me and say how great it was. So, I can safely say the use of folksong in the classroom is acceptable from K thru college!

I have a degree in Music/Composition, play the piano and guitar and love to lead people in song.

CORRESPONDANCE FROM OUR READERS continued

I will have a multiple subject credential in elementary education in May '86.

****

Betty Casey 427 Hillway Drive
REdwood City, California 94062

A friend of mine just gave me a copy of Social Education, October '85** and it's great. I've been working in our school for 9 years trying to integrate social studies and music and it was wonderful to see that I'm on the right track.

I've used two of the songs you cited with the samekind of success you noted. Keep the great ideas rolling.

****

Georgia Hamilton 212 E. Blair
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

I've shared the past issues with several friends but must confess I ha not been through them all myself. I i tend to set aside time this summer to get thru every issue.

There is something for every leve in every issue but it seems that duri the year I'm so rushed, I don't take or have - the time to go through them select new material to use in my less plans.

It isn't because your suggestions teaching ideas aren't excellent. They

****

Dorothy Hawkins 6757 Banning Drive Oakland, CA 94611

I've moved - and it wasn't just the beautiful weather which brought r to California. Rather, I'm embarking upon my Master's degree in music educati at Holy Names College in Oakland. But why would a loyal Wisconsinite (21 yea pick up and move to the edge of the Pacific?

My special interest in Holy Names is their Kodaly-inspired teacher tra ing program. Zoltan Kodaly, a Hungarian composer, musicoligist, philosopher & educator, established a system of music education which has produced a nearly literate generation of music consumers - a whole generation of people who lo fine music and are at ease reading the notation, singing what they read, and knowing their own musical culture. Kodaly believed it was every child's birth right to have knowledge about music, not only the gifted and talented. He believed that only the best music was good enough for children and folk song provided an excellent gateway to the art musics of the world. The folk songs each person's country are their musical mother-tongue, and because we are all endowed with voices, this type of music education emphasizes the singing voice and through it, the development of 'inner hearing'.(This is the ability to se musical notation and sing it inside - to actually hear it inside).

I thought your readers might be interested to know there exists a nationwide network of music educators dedicated to these principles, and to th development of an appreciation for the musics of the world. This organization is known as O.A.K.E., the Organization of American Kodaly Educators, and ther are several regional chapters across the U.S. which hold workshops throughout the year, exchange their ideas and share the music they have with others. Tho interested in finding out more about this network can contact the O.A.K.E. Exe tive Secretary at : University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Department of Music Whitewater, WI 53190

****

We thought Dorothy's information would be of interest to our readers. As a matter of fact, Laurie is presenting a workshop at their national O.A.K.E. meeting this March in St. Louis. The topic is Folksong: It's For All Children From K Through 12th Grades and will be SAturday afternoon, March 15, 1986 3:45-4:45. For those of you who are attending the conference, I would be glad to see you at the workshop. Do stop by,and say Hello. And tell your friends and colleagues about Laurie's session.

** Available as Free Material #44--see page 63-whole article from Social Education on folk, country, western, rock music.

Folksong in the Library

by
Zach Scifres 560 Hillcrest Way Green River, Wyoming 82935

Thanks for all the back issues of your publication. You asked for some information on how I use folksongs with my students. To begin with, I am not a classroom teacher. I am an elementary school librarian covering grades K-5 I try hard to make the library a pleasant and interesting place to visit and have found that the kids really like singing with me. I try to pick songs which have a chorus, so they can join in and sing-along. I have found that the children are not concerned with my singing abilities (or lack of same) or with my limited guitar playing. They are amazed that I can play the guitar at all and have never mentioned that I can't sing well enough to make records. Nor do I expect the kids to sing expertly or professionally. The idea is for me to get them participating.

I am a big fan of Pete Seeger and have attended several concerts given by him. He always gets the audience participating. I don't think Pete worries about the fact that some of the audience isn't"professional". He just wants the sharing and participation to get going. So do I.

The children always get excited when they see that I've brought my guitar to school and their enthusiasm carries over to myself. Often they will ask me to bring my guitar "next week" and will ask to sing certain songs again and again.

Many of my lessons, especially with the 4th and 5th graders are related to history and I've found that there are a number of folksongs which tie in there. Some of these are "traditional" and others are more current "folksongs" for whom there is a known author. These might be termed "literary" folksongs. In the same way that those involved with literature, differentiate between the true ballad as opposed to something like "Rhime of the Ancient Mariner" or "Ballad of Reading Gaol."

One of my units is on outlaws and gunfighters. This actually has very little to do with the set curriculum for social studies, but it gets up an interest in history and encourages reading the books we have on this topic (a considerable number). Songs which fit in here are "Jesse James", "Billy the Kid" and "Sam Bass". I have the words for these songs and can furnish background on the outlaws sung about. I cannot read music. So the songs I sing are those I've learned from recordings.

I also sing "the Titanic" with the children; it has a great chorus. This ties in with a lesson I do on the sinking of that most famous of ships. Again, this has nothing in particular to do with the curriculum, but I am fortunate in that with regards to the library program, I am able to do what I want to do. I always tell the children that the library is the biggest room in the world, because everything in the world is in the books we have.

We do some railroad songs, too. This comes into play when the 4th graders study the railroad during a unit on westward expansion. The Union Pacific runs through the southern part of Wyoming. Songs here are "I've Been Working On the Railroad", "Wreck of Old 97", "Engine 143" and Tom Paxton's song, "Ramblin' Boy" and also, "Hobo's Lullabye".

Those are some of the things which we do in the older grades. All of the children enjoy singing the song "Hey Lili Lili Lo." I learned this from a Weavers' album and have changed it around to become what the kids call "The Name Song." I write out the name of each student in the class and stick it on the guitar so I won't forget and leave anyone out. Then I alternate between boys and girls and sing a verse about everyone, using their name:

"I know a boy/His name is John/He went to school with no clothes on." Or: "I know a girl named Michelle/ She has big feet?. And they sure do smell." And so on, all through the class. I usually do this song late in the year so that the children feel comfortable with me and know that I'm not "making fun" of them. In fact, at the end of the song, I always put myself into it, so that they KNOW that it is all in fun. Unfortunately, my name is not easy to rhyme: "I know a man named Mr. Scifres/ He came to school/ And he wore diapers." Or: "I know a man named Mr. S/He came to school? And wore a dress." The kids always love this song and if we are coming close to the end of school and haven't done it, they DEMAND it.

Another history song is one called "McKinley" , which I learned off a record by the Greenbriar Boys. It has to do with the assassination of President McKinley.

With the younger grades I often do some of Woody Guthrie's songs. These are "Clean-O", "Mail Myself To You", "Car-Car" and such. I have the words to them all and am sure that Woody would not object to them being used "for free." In fact, I would bet that he would be tickled that they are being used.

Same with Tom Paxton. I use some of his songs, too. With the older children I sometimes sing "I'm the Man That Built the Bridges". All the grades like to sing "Going to the Zoo" and "My Dog's Better Than Your Dog". I wrote to Tom thanking him for those songs and told him how much the kids enjoy them and he wrote back thanking me.

With younger children, animal songs are very popular. In this case it is easy to show them books on each of the animals to encourage reading. "The Gray Goose", "Old MacDonald","Aunt Rhody", "Froggie Went A'Courtin'" and so on.

Two story songs are very popular, though they may not fit in with what you have in mind. They are both from Pete Seeger. One is called "Abyoyo" about a giant and the other is "The Foolish Frog," which fortunately is available in book form from MacMillan Press, and the back of it contains the music. Pete does not mind that they are used. In fact, I wrote to him and told him how much the kids delight in the story-songs and he wrote back to encourage me to carry on.

Well, that's some of what I've been doing over the past several years. I think what you are doing is marvelous. You have already furnished me with background information to several songs I use now and you can rest assured that I'll be incorporating this into the songs this coming school year.

I just remembered another popular one,"May There Always Be Sunshine" which is also from a Pete Seeger record. It was written about 20 years ago by a Russian schoolboy, age about five. It only has one verse, but it's great and I also sing the Russian words with it.

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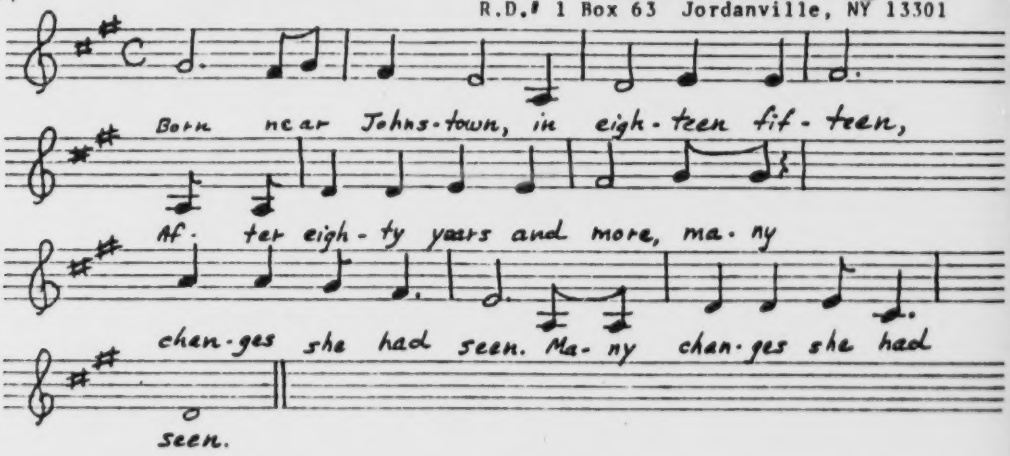
Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Words and music by
Clare Wettemann ©1985
R.D.# 1 Box 63 Jordanville, NY 13301



1. Born near Johnstown,
In eighteen-fifteen,
After eighty years and more,
Many changes she had seen.
Many changes she had seen.

2. Oh, Eleazer, my father's only son-
I'll be so brave and try to do
The things you might have done--
The things you might have done.

3. "I love you, Henry.
Over others you have your sway."
So they were married, but she would not
Say "I will obey--"
Not say "I will obey."

4. "All the slaves are not men,"
Mr. Garrison did say.
The Misses Mott and Stanton
Planned a Women's Rights Day--
A Women's Rights Day.

5. "That we can be free," (said Lizzie)*
"Is the worst of all lies,
Unless we women also hold
Elective franchise,
Elective franchise.

Repeat verse two.

6. With Lucretia Mott,
She shared a dream.
With Susan B. Anthony,
She made a team--
She made a team.

7. Equality for women
Was the banner they unfurled.
"You stir up Susan
And she stirs up the world!"
"She stirs up the world!"

8. "If she'd have been a man," (said Susan)
The things she might have done!"
But the Cady household
Only had one son--
It only had one son.

Repeat verse two.

9. She did not live to see the
Women's Suffrage Day.
Yet Cady and we women
Will always have our say--
We'll always have our say!

* These words are spoken, not sung.

Claire is a teacher and a folksinger who performs historical folksongs at schools, libraries, museums and at community events. Claire wrote this song for a concert she gave in Johnston, New York last summer. We are happy to print it here. Claire also wrote a three page paper about the life of Elizabeth Cady STanton to give background for her song. We are offering this three page paper as a FREE MATERIAL #43. It is yours for a 22¢ stamp. Don't miss it!!

Farmers of the Plains and Prairies
Their Story in Song: 1850~1880

"The great business of the continent is agriculture," wrote Benjamin Franklin in 1784. "For one artisan or merchant, I suppose, we have at least one hundred farmers, by far the greatest part cultivators of their own fertile lands, from whence many of them draw, not only the food necessary for their subsistence, but materials of their clothing . . .

"Whoever . . . views here the happy mediocrity that so generally prevails throughout these States, where the cultivator works for himself, and supports his family in decent plenty, will, methinks, see abundant reason to bless Divine Providence . . . and be convinced that no nation known to us enjoys a greater share of human felicity."

In Jefferson's view, the worst course America could take would be to follow in Britain's footsteps and strive to become a great manufacturing nation — as northern merchants and capitalists of the period were enthusiastically advocating. In a letter to James Madison, he wrote that he trusted the United States would "remain virtuous . . . as long as agriculture is our principal object . . . When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there."[3]

"The class of citizens who provide at once their own food and raiment, may be viewed as the most truly independent," wrote James Madison in 1792. "It follows, that the greater the proportion of this class to the whole society, the more free, the more independent, and the more happy must be the society itself."

Farmers of the Plains and Prairies - Introduction

The United States throughout its history, until at least 1920, has been predominantly a country of farmers and woodsmen. Until the Great Depression of 1929 which began to wipe out family farmers in massive numbers, distribution of the land among small farmers both as tenants and owners remained widespread. Hunger for land must be reckoned through the history of immigration to these shores as the central and primary factor attracting millions both from Europe and from Asia. This immigration endowed the new Republic with numberless agricultural and horticultural skills --- the skills of vinegrowers, wheat farmers, dairy people, sheep herders and wool growers, vegetable crops, hopgrowers, poultry, food processing and preserving, tanning and leatherwork and many more.

Despite the importance of farmers in building this country and in creating our heritage, they have become today, in our crowded urban world, forgotten men and women. We and our children go to the supermarkets and take what we need from the shelves without giving much thought to the land from which this plenty comes; or to the people who throughout our history have worked the land and so have made possible the miracles of production upon which our civilization has been founded.

But American farmers, as much as any other segment of the American people, have celebrated their lives and their life style in song. This issue is dedicated to the theme of farmers in our history. In particular, we focus upon farmers of the midWest -- the land of plains and prairies which over the years has constituted the bread and meat basket of the United States and which has also provided food for peoples throughout the world.

Without our farmers there would have been no civilization, no permanent American existence. We celebrate the hunter and the fur trapper, the cowboy and the outlaw, but the farmer had a significance in our history which has endured much longer. The farmer carried civilization with him wherever he went with his plough and wagon. He cultivated the land, built farms along with which came towns, roads, railroads and canals.

The peopling of this country by farm people tough enough to face and overcome the tremendous rigors of settlement, produced a sturdy self-sufficient, self-reliant population, settled for the most part of land that was its own. This ideal of the independent farmer was immortalized in the concept of "Jeffersonian Democracy" which perhaps was the dominant ideology of the American people until the end of the 19th century. It projected the ideal of people the foundation of whose life, integrity and independence was the land itself, in which they had their roots; for whom independence meant running their own community affairs by democratic process, and reining in potentially destructive federal and state governments by regular scrutiny at the elections; and, in some places, exercising a constitutional right of recall.

This ideal, of course, had its dark side. It had been built upon the destruction of Native American rights and independence. It was, at least until Reconstruction, a white man's ideal which rejected with indignation the thought that Black people should also have the right of access to cheap - and later free - federal lands.

Today the ideal of the independent family farmer is at the edge of extinction. "Parity price" for the farmer has, since the early part of the 20th century, represented the price that he must receive for his crops if he is to meet costs, stay in business, and not go under. The parity price for farmers is exactly equivalent to the minimum wage for workers, the wage that they must have if they are to raise families and go on existing. When the government permits the price of produce to sag below parity, farmers will first go in debt to the banks, and then out of business. This is what is happening in the mid-West today as the banks forclose small farmers' lands and as the small farmer vanishes at the frightening rate - as in Nebraska - of some 1500 farms per week.

Today farming has become big business; little farmers, forced off the land, are ruined, and have no alternative but to abandon the land and their way of life, and move to the cities. This way of life, that people like Jefferson and Franklin thought was the most beautiful thing in America and in the world, has been destroyed. Farms have become factories in the field, and farm production has become just another branch of industry.

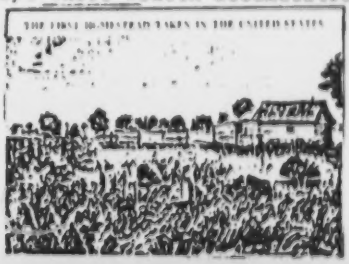
This farm industry, like other branches of American industry, uses huge machines, and generates poison along with food. Agriculture today consumes more petroleum than any other American industry. It sprays the land with weed killers, insecticides and chemical fertilizers which leave toxic residues in what we eat; it stimulates the growth of animals and birds with hormones, antibiotics and a vast array of other drugs whose long term effects are still unknown.

This huge change from family to industrial farming has made the United States one of the emptiest lands at the same time that it is one of the most overcrowded. As of 1977 nearly 75% of the population lives densely packed in urban centers, on less than 2% of the country's total acreage. Nearly 8% of all Americans, as a matter of fact, do not live on the mainland at all -- they are jammed onto two small islands off the eastern coast called Manhattan and Long Island.

When, as today, the banks foreclose the small farmer, the big corporation with its corporation-type farm may take over, but even worse catastrophe looms. The land has, in the midWest, been exploited to the point of no return. It is destroyed by duststorms and erosion. In certain areas weeds are taking over the wasted, ravished soil. We are producing a new Ethiopia in the Promised Land.

In the name of progress, the countryside is being turned over to technology. Our whole people in large part have lost its great legacy -- the peace and joy of our countryside. Goldsmith's words applied to the English scene two centuries ago when industrialization was just beginning, have even greater relevance to the American scene today:

Ill fares the land (he wrote) to endless ills
a prey. Where wealth accumulates and men decay.



El-a-noy

Among the pioneers were boomers, boosters. About the time this song came, the *Shawneetown Advocate*, only newspaper in seven counties of southern Illinois, was proclaiming its ideal to be "universal liberty abroad, and an ocean-bound republic at home." In northern Illinois, the *Gem of the Prairie*, a weekly magazine published in Chicago, was declaring, "The West must have a literature peculiarly its own. It is here that the great problem of human destiny will be worked out on a grander scale than was ever before attempted or conceived." . . . John D. Black, a Chicago attorney-at-law, lived on the Ohio River as a boy and heard his father sing El-a-noy. . . . Shawnee Ferry was a crossing point for many who had come by the Ohio river route or on Wilderness Road through Cumberland Gap, headed for Illinois . . . The fourth verse is probably a later addition thrown in by some joker who felt challenged by the preceding verses.

Freely ♪ = 96 or 132
GUITAR- PLAY FREELY AND SLOWLY OR WITH SCRATCH IN FAST RENDITION
Dm
Am
Dm
Way down up-on the Wa-bash sich land was nev-er known, If Ad-am had passed
Arp.
F
Dm
Am
B♭
F
o-ver it, the soil he'd sure-ly own. He'd think it was the Gar-den he'd played in when a
Arp.
Dm
A7(or Am)
Dm CHORUS
B♭
boy. And straight pro-nounce it E-den in the state of El-a-noy. Then move your fam-'ly
Arp.
F
Dm
A7(or Am)
Dm
west-ward, Good health you will en-joy, And rise to wealth and hon-our in the state of El-a-noy.

1 'Way down upon the Wabash,
Sich land was never known;
If Adam had passed over it,
The soil he'd surely own;
He'd think it was the garden
He'd played in when a boy,
And straight pronounce it Eden,
In the State of El-a-noy.
Refrain:
Then move your family westward,
Good health you will enjoy,
And rise to wealth and honor
In the State of El-a-noy.

2 'Twas here the Queen of Sheba came,
With Solomon of old,
With an Ass load of spices,
Pomegranates and fine gold;
And when she saw this lovely land,
Her heart was filled with joy,
Straightway she said: "I'd like to be
A Queen in El-a-noy."
Refrain:

3 She's bounded by the Wabash,
The Ohio and the Lakes,
She's crawfish in the swampy lands,
The milk-sick and the shakes;
But these are slight diversions
And take not from the joy
Of living in this garden land,
The State of El-a-noy.
Refrain:

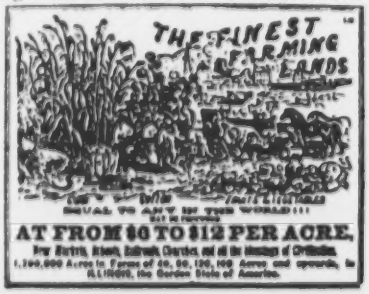
4 Away up in the northward,
Right on the border line,
A great commercial city,
Chicago, you will find.
Her men are all like Abelard,
Her women like Heloise;
All honest virtuous people,
For they live in El-a-noy.
Last Refrain:
Then move your family westward,
Bring all your girls and boys,
And cross at Shawnee ferry
To the State of El-a-noy.

"Writing of Illinois in 1818, Samuel Crabtree said in a letter to his brother,"This is a country for a man to enjoy himself, where you can see prairie sixty miles long and ten broad at two dollars an acre, that will produce from seventy to a hundred bushels of Indian corn per acre. I measured Indian corn more than fifteen feet high and some of the ears had from four to seven hundred grains. I believe I saw more peaches and apples rotting on the ground than would sink the British fleet, and they have such flocks of turkeys, geese, ducks and hens as would surprise you. The poorest family has a cow or two and some sheep. Good rye whiskey, apple and peach brandy at forty cents per gallon, which I think equals the rum; excellent cider at three dollars per barrel of thirty-three gallons, barrel included." Alan Lomax, Folk Songs of North America , p.76.

The introduction and words are from Carl Sandburg, American Songbag, pp.162-3. The music is from Alan Lomax's Folk Song In North America.

It also goes under the title: "Move To Illinois, The Land of Milk and Honey". I found a copy of it at the American Antiquarian Society in Wooster, Massachusetts. This song was a favorite of Lincoln.

Milksick and the shakes -- malaria



Uncle Sam's Farm

Rapid settlement of the frontier was stimulated in part by the Preemption Act of 1840 and the availability of free land under the Homestead Act of 1862. The pace of settlement became even faster with the construction of the Transcontinental railroad and branch lines which spread across the entire western country after 1865. The railroads carried industiral goods to the new settlements in the west and carried back foodstuffs grown by the farmers and cattle raised by the ranchers.

In order to encourage the railroads to build across the prairies and plains, state and federal governments handed over to them millions of acres -- ten square miles of land for each mile of track laid. Western states and territories wanted more people, for people were the greatest resource for economic development and growth. Without people, territories could not grow into states, western markets could not expand, eastern cities and factories would be starved of food and raw materials.

"Ad astra per aspera"

Northern Kansas.

AN INVITATION

FINEST COUNTRY

IN THE WORLD.

DESCRIBED IN THIS FOLDER.

COME

To Northern Kansas

ALWAYS AT THE FRONT.

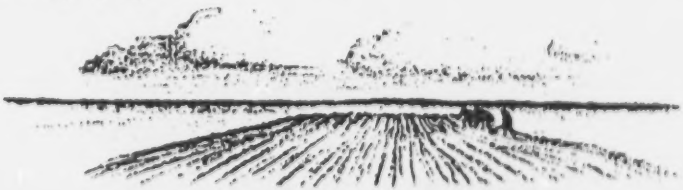
BRING YOUR FAMILY

NO SALOONS.

To sell this land and attract settlers, the railroads territorial and state legislatures launched a vigorous colonization campaign. They flooded the East and Europe too with literature depicting their land as a garden of Eden. The virgin soil was so fertile (they said), that you just dug a hole, threw the seed in and then jumped aside so you wouldn't be knocked over, it grew so fast. The air (they said) was so pure that nobody got ill. Corpses taken out West to be buried came to life instead. The Illinois Central Railroad proclaimed THE FINEST FARMING LAND EQUAL TO ANY IN THE WORLD MAY BE PROCURED at grom $6 to $12 per acre, near Markets, Schools, Railroads, Churches and the Blessings of Civilization.

One of Nebraska's slogans was "Land for the Landless! Homes for the Homeless!!" and, said the land commissioners, "epidemics and diseases are unknown in Nebraska.

The popular song "Uncle Sam's Farm" sung in the 1850's and '60's was written by Jesse Hutchinson, Jr., of the famous Hutchinson singing family. It states quite plainly that "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm, So come right away to this country and have no fear of harm." The version given here is from The Laura Inger Wilder Songbook by Eugenia Garson. Four different handbills in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Mass., gives the words to this song, but no music. The handbills have no dates, are printed in New York or Philadelphia and state that the tune is "Walk in the parlor and hear the banjo play."



G
D7
1. Of all the might - y na - tions In the east or in the west, Oh, this
2. St. Law - rence marks our north - ern line As fast her wa - ters flow; And the
G
D7
G
glo - rious Yan - kee na - tion Is the great - est and the best, We have
Ri - o Grande our south - ern bound, 'Way down to Mex - i - co; From the
G
D7
room for all cre - a - tion And our ban - ner is un-furl'd, Here's a
great At - lan - tic O - cean Where the sun be - gins to dawn, Leap a -
G
D7
G
gen - 'ral in - vi - ta - tion To the peo - ple of the world.
cross the Rock - y Moun - tains Far a - way to O - re - gon.
Chorus
G
Oh, come a - way! Come a - way!
D
G
C
A7
D
Come a-way, I say! Oh, come a-way! Come a-way! Come right a-way! Oh,
G
D
G
come to this coun-try and have no fear of harm, Our Un - cle Sam is rich e-nough To
G
D7
G
D7
G
give us all a farm!

3. While the South shall raise the cotton
And the West the corn and pork,
New England manufactories
Shall do up the finer work,
For the deep and flowing waterfalls
That course along our hills,
Are just the thing for washing sheep
And driving cotton mills.

(Chorus)

4. Our fathers gave us Liberty
But little did they dream,
The grand results that pour along
This mighty age of steam,
For our mountains, lakes, and rivers
Are all a blaze of fire,
And we send our news by lightning
On the telegraphic wire.

(Chorus)

5. Yes! we're bound to beat the nation
For our motto's "Go ahead,"
And we'll tell the foreign countries
That our people are well-fed,
For the nations must remember
That Uncle Sam is not a fool,
For the people do the voting
And the children go to school.

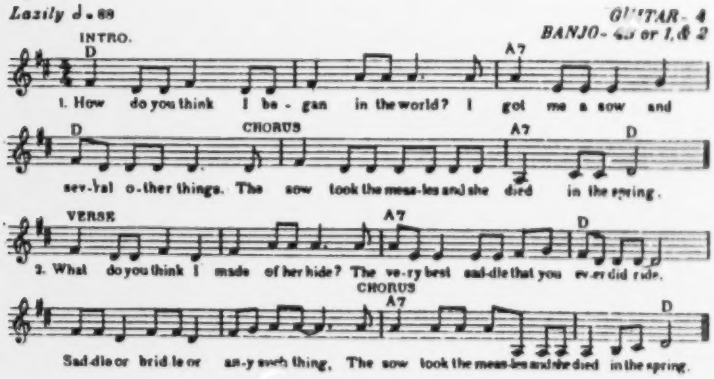
(Chorus)

The Sow Took the Measles

The old saying that "you can't make a silkpurse out of a sow's ear"is happily proved wrong in this delightful song of comic exaggeration, similar to the "Old Darby Ram" (see Animal Songs, vol V #3). When the old sow dies of the measles, the thrifty farmer and his wife utilize every part of the animal to make her death as economically painless as possible. The song has been found in almost every part of the country from New England south to Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia, and west as far as Missouri. Best known as "The Sow Takes The Measles" it also goes under the titles "My Old Sow's Nose","The Old Sow Song", and "The Measles In The Spring." It appears to be derived from the old English folk song "The Jolly Herring", a tall tale about a herring forty feet long. This fish song traveled to Ireland and came across the ocean to New England with fishermen, sailors and immigrants to become a Cape Cod lullaby.

Tall tales have always been a favorite kind of folk humor, and the New World with its giant trees, animals, mountains and rivers, lent itself to stretching the truth a bit.

This version is from Alan Lomax, Folk Songs of North America, p. 31.


Lazily ♩= 88
GUITAR- 4
BANJO- 4,5 or 1,& 2
INTRO.
D
A7
1. How do you think I be - gan in the world? I got me a sow and
CHORUS
D
A7
D
sev-'al o-ther things. The sow took the mea-les and she died in the spring.
VERSE
A7
D
2. What do you think I made of her hide? The ve-ry best sad-dle that you ev-er did ride.
CHORUS
A7
D
Sad-dle or brid le or an-y such thing, The sow took the mea-les and she died in the spring.

1. How do you think I began in the world?
   I got me a sow and sev'ral other things.
   CHORUS:
   The sow took the measles and died in the spring.

2. What do you think I made of her hide?
   The very best saddle that you ever did ride.
   Saddle or bridle or any such thing, (CHO.)

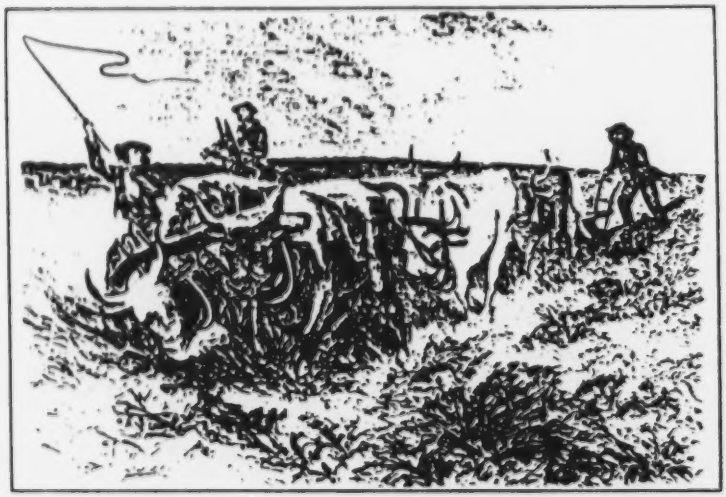
3. What do you think I made of her nose?
   The very best thimble that ever sewed clothes,
   Thimble or thread or any such thing, (CHO.)

4. What do you think I made of her tail?
   The very best whip that ever sought sail.
   Whip or whip socket any such thing, (CHO.)

5. What do you think I made other feet?
   The very best pickles you ever did eat.
   Pickles or glue or any such thing, (CHO.)

Which reminds us that Armour's Meat Packing Company's slogan, which began business in Chicago after the Civil War, boasted,

"We use everything but the squeal."



BREAKING THE PRAIRIE

From a drawing by Theodore R. Davis, *Harper's Weekly*, 1868.

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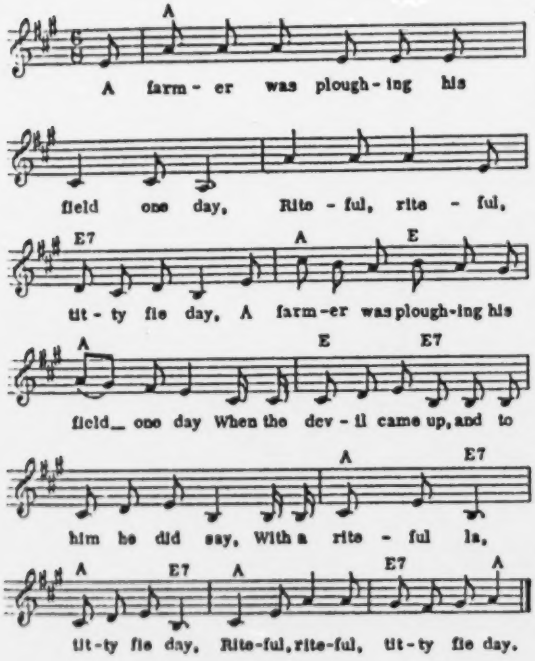
The Farmer's Cursed Wife*


A
A farm - er was plough - ing his
field one day, Rite - ful, rite - ful,
E7 A E
tit - ty fie day, A farm-er was plough-ing his
A E E7
field_ one day When the dev - il came up, and to
A E7
him he did say, With a rite - ful la,
A E7 A E7 A
tit-ty fie day, Rite-ful, rite-ful, tit-ty fie day.

"See here my good man, I have come for your wife
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
See here my good man I have come for your wife,
For she's the bane and torment of your life,"
With a riteful la, etc.

So the Devil he hoisted her up on his hump,
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
So the Devil he hoisted her up his hump,
And down to Hell with her he did jump,
With a riteful la, etc.

When they got there the gates they were shut,
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
When they got there the gates they were shut,
With a blow of her hand she laid open his nut,
Riteful la, etc.

Two little devils were playing handball,
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
Two little devils were playing handball,
"Take her back Daddy, she'll be the death of us all!"
Riteful la, etc.

So the Devil he hoisted her up on his hump,
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
So the Devil he hoisted her up on his hump,
And back to earth with her he did jump,
With a riteful la, etc.

"See here my good man, I have come with your wi
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
"See here my good man, I have come with your wife,
For she's the bane and torment of my life,"
Riteful la, etc.

Now they say that the women are worse than the mer
Riteful, riteful, titty fie day,
They say that the women are worse than the men,
They went down to Hell and got kicked out again,
Riteful la, etc.

According to American folk tradition, farmers had other troubles in addition to drought, insects, floods and poor crops; and the worst of these was a sharp-tongued wife. An old English and Scottish ballad already in print by 1630, tells a story popular among folk in many lands, -- a shrewish wife who is too much for even the Devil to handle. "The Farmer's Cursed Wife" was popular in all sections of the United States. In this, as in other cases in America, the Devil does not fare well in the songs and legends of our country. Daniel Webster outwits him in New England, and out West there's a song where the cowboys lasso and brand him, clip his ears and knot his tail ("Tying A Knot In the Devil's Tail.")

The story of"The Farmer's Curst Wife" never seems to vary. The Devil appears to a farmer in his field and asks for a member of his family. The farmer gives him his scolding wife. The Devil carries her off

* Also known as The Devil and The Farmer's Wife , Tony Scott, Ballad of America ,pp. 152-3

to Hell, where she proceeded to beat as many imps as came within her reach. Satan, realizing that the old woman is "About to clean out Hell" carries her back to her husband, substantiating the old folk adage that "nothing is meaner than a mean woman!"

The women had their songs, too, which tell their side of the story. Life for a farmer's wife was a difficult and lonely one. The long hours, backbreaking work, wind and weather took a terrible toll on their youth and beauty. These, along with the large number of children she bore and raised, kept her constantly busy and her roles as a wife, mother, helper and worker were endless. Farm women had to postpone conveniences and pleasures. Money available was for machinery, barns, fencing and repairs rather than for curtains or new furniture, books, travel and other things which may have made their lives more comfortable.

Life was toil and its sentiments were expressed in the song "The Housekeeper's Lament"(see Women's Songs, Vol IV # 1). It may originally have been an Irish topical ballad. It has been found in this country in several 19th century songsters and in diaries of early settlers of the Midwest as well as from traditional singers in Ohio and Florida.

A beautiful and illuminating picture is given to us in the following quotation of pioneer life long ago in the midwest. In the June 1943 issue of the Journal of American Folklore, a pioneer woman recalled her Iowan childhood in an article entitled,

Winter Evenings in Iowa 1873-1880

"We left the farm when I was only a small girl, but though nearly sixty years have passed, those winter evenings are still clear in my memory. We led a simple life ; there was no other. We lived seven miles from a small town. A lumberwagon was our only conveyance , there was nothing to go to and little money for any attractions there might have been. So we had to make our own entertainment.

Chores done, supper over and dishes washed we moved from the lean-to which was kitchen and dining room to the "front room" which was also the bedroom for father and mother and the youngest member of the family, myself, who slept in the trundle bed. The room was about 14 by 16 feet and the furniture which had been brought from Pa. was old and of the plainest character. There was no plastering on the walls, just heavy paper tacked to the studding. There was however, always rag carpet on the floor for mother kept herself well supplied in addition to weaving many yards for others.

Iowa winters were very cold and I can well remember seeing the coal oil frozen in the lamps in the morning; I can't recall that we thought much about the cold for we wore warm clothing; long woolen underwear, woolen stockings and woolen mittens--all knit by mother - heavy shoes and other garments in keeping with the weather. We certainly were comfortable while in bed for we slept with a feather bed under us and another one over us, with plenty of comforts. One of three very large quilts covered the bed, piled high with the big feather ticks. There was the Queen's Fancy quilt, the Grape and the Rose-in-the-Pattypan, all of which were very pretty and had been beautifully quilted by mother when she was a teacher in Pennsylvania and boarded round with "the scholars." At the head was a bolster , along pillow reaching entirely across the bed and on this were set two individual pillows. The bed was always perfectly "dressed."

Refreshments of some sort were always provided in the evening. Apples were plentiful and cheap. We raised our own popcorn and we never seemed to tire of it. It was fun to scrape out turnips and apples and see who could do the neatest job and leave the thinnest shell. We had plenty of hazelnuts and walnuts. Then, mother's cooky jar never failed . The cookies were by no means rich Confections, but they tasted good to us. Nothing but the leavening and salt had to be bought. Father raised wheat, took it to the mill and had it ground and brought home flour and bran. He raised sugar cane, took it to the sorghum mill and brought it home as molasses. Lard was provided by our hogs, eggs by our hens.

continued on p. 46

Winter Evenings in Iowa 1873-1880

Elrick, Reddy and Whitey furnished the milk. These ingredients were combined in proper proportions and the result was plenty of cookies. While eating apples, we sometimes told our fortunes from the seeds, using the rhymes:

One he loves, Two she loves
Three they both love, Four he comes
Five he tarries, Six he courts
Seven they marry

Sewing carpet rags was the children's usual occupation. Mother paid five cents per pound and my two brothers earned many a nickel at that job. The woolen mittens and long woolen stockings for the entire family were knitted by mother largely during these winter evenings, and then, too, there was the never ending patching of trousers and darning of hose. Indeed, I can't remember her sitting down without some work in her hands.

Father, before we were able to afford a corn sheller, use to bring in tubs of corn and then by means of a scoop shovel, he would shell corn for seed, using the sharp edge of the shovel to scrape the kernels from the cob. While carpet rags were being sewn, and other work went on, we might ask riddles and no matter how old they were or how often we heard them, they never lost their interest for us.

"What makes a cow look over the hill? Because she can't see through it."

"Round as an apple, deep as a cup, all the King's horses can't pull it up. A well."

We would usually spend part of each evening singing. Father was a fine singer and could read notes easily. He often sang the notes and beat time much to our delight.

Some of the songs they sang were:

Little Brown Jug, My Father and Mither WErc Irish, Old Gray Hoss, Nickerty, Nackerty Now, Now, Now, Jubilee, the Fox, Pop Goes the Weasel, GreenGrows the Rushes-O, Roamish Lady and Miss Betsy, Paper of Pins, Go Tell Aunt Rhody, Banks of the Ohio, Yellow Rose of Texas, Darling Nellie Gray and others.

Our favorite songs by far were the ballads with "Miss Betsy" a strong lead.

Checkers were often played and was so interesting that it was hard to put the game aside. The board was home-made of real board and the men were kernels o red and white corn.

THere were few books in the home and all save one was theological. However, we were subscribers to a weekly newspaper, The Chicago Interocean. One winter there was a continued story in it, a murder mystery, "Great Porter Square". With this story, mother who was a good reader, entertained us for months. We were all sitting on the edge of our chairs far too excited to sew carpet rags, as the plots and counterplots were built up. and then slowly, but surely, the net closed around the murderer and he got his just deserts.

We never tired of hearing father and mother tell of their life in Pennsylvania and so the "Tell me when" stories were called for many times....

The brothers went to their room upstairs, mother pulled out the trundle bed and after "Now I Lay Me" tucked me in for the night. FAther filled the stove with wood, closed the damper and wound the clock.

Lights out. Good night. Happy dreams.

Starving to Death on My Government Claim

Land had always been the lodestone that drew people to the New World. Land hunger had been the principal motive for westward migration from the times of early Virginia , when the first settlers turned from the idea of jewels, gold and raising silk to the pursuit of farming.

In 1841, Congress passed the Preemption Act which provided that the head of a family, a widow or a single man over 21, could file a claim for 160 acres of the public domain. The claimant had to create a dwelling on the claim putchase the land at $1.25 an acre and swear that he would settle on the land and not sell it to any third party. While there were many honest and bona fide settlers, much violence and fraud took place. Many claimants took the oath with the deliberate intent of selling it as quickly as possible to speculators.

From the start of our colonial period, westward expansion had always been accompanied by an intense, frenzied spirit of speculation. This widespread speculation had never been restricted or controlled by government land policy. In fact, the government seemed to accept the idea that a great part of the public lands would be acquired by wealthy men for investment purposes.

Such a policy was deeply resented by the majority of the actual settlers on the frontier. They petitioned their congressmen to change this and won a historic victory when the Homestead Act was passed by Congress in 1862. This Act opened the public domain to settlers of little means. Congress granted 160 acres free to any settler who would work to improve his claim and live on it for a period of five years and had not bore arms against the U.S. However, Congress did not reserve the land only for actual settlers, as the reformers had wished, but also permitted enormous tracts of public land to be bought up by wealthy investors, speculators and the railroads.

Many settlers found that the 160 acre free homestead was inferior land, often miles away from railroad lines, churches, towns and schools. Many preferred, or to survive were forced to buy their land from the railroads or speculators in order to get fertile, well-located sites.

Nevertheless, when the Homestead Act was passed, a flood of settlers poured into the inviting prairie lands of SW Minnesota, NW Iowa, SE dakota and eastern Nebraska in the late 1860's and early 1870's. Civil War veterans, farmers from the East and midwest, immigrants from Europe, all swarmed over the land. The rush to sign up at the land offices was unbelieveable. As sporting fans line up the night before and sleep out on the pavement to get tickets for a big game, so did prospective settlers. Some men slept in front of the land offices all night in order to be the first in line. An understanding was reached among those waiting, allowing each one to drop out occasionally to get some coffee and something to eat wihtout losing his place in line.

Many who came did find cheap land and would succeed in building comfortable and prosperous lives in the new country. But many who came found only hard work, heartache and watched their crops and dreams wither under the cruel, hot rainless summers and the unending blizzards of winter. They had to face early frosts, drought, hail, prairie fires, low prices, crop failures, illness, Indians, death oflivestock and grasshoppers, coyotes, pests and unceasing winds.

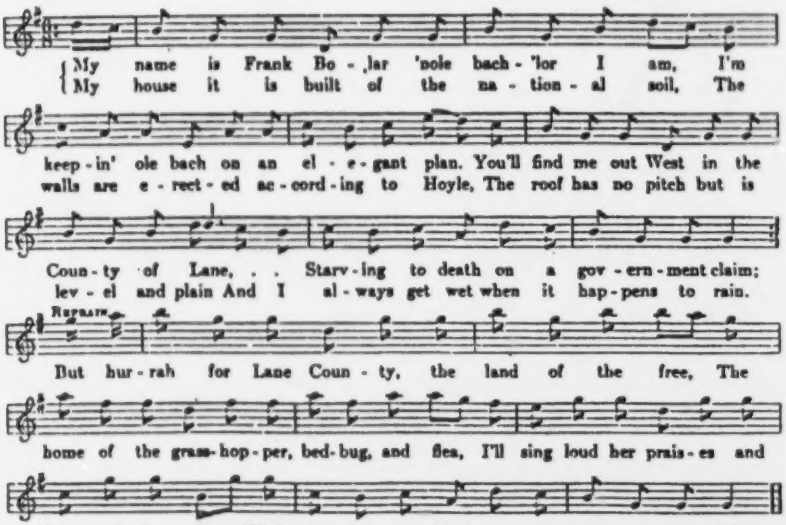
One pioneer woman wrote: "The dugout was so full of centipedes that we had to sleep with a butcher knife under our pillows.. we would hack them to pieces. Some nights we would kill as many as twenty...

Some nights were drought years. From June 1859 to November 1860, not a drop of rain fell in Nebraska. Even the prairie grass withered. The people ate

(continued on p.49)

Starving to Death on My Government Claim *

What is a pioneer? An American poet answered, "A pioneer is a beginner." It was a child-like answer. The pioneers in any country are those who make its beginnings. They begin the trails that later become roads. They stake out land claims, put in crops and start farming. An inscription chiseled on the state capitol building of Nebraska reads, "Honour to pioneers who broke sod that men to come might live." They were strugglers, those who went out on the Great Plains to make homes. They took weeks for the wagon trip west as "movers." Or they rode on "Home-seekers' Excursion Trains," eating from lunch baskets, sleeping on the seats of railroad cars two, three, four nights. Once located on the quarter-section claim, which would be their own land and home if they stayed a few years and farmed it, there was strife and struggle. To get food and clothes, to keep a shelter going that would shut out rain and snow, to outwit the grasshoppers that came to eat crops, to live through bad cooking, blizzards and vermin, was a steady round of strife and struggle. "There's nothing will make a man hard and profane like starving to death on a government claim," we are told in this song. They had a saying, "The worse things are the better they are." Sometimes the battle wore them down; it was too much. With "nothing to lose and nothing to gain," they quit as this bachelor, Frank Bolar, did. "They moved to new parts," was common talk as to neighbors. Or, "they vamoosed, skedaddled." The text here is from Edwin Ford Piper, whose poems of "barbed wire" cover that Iowa and Nebraska territory where cattle used to have free range. There were no fences; then came barbed wire. "My people always sang Lane County Bachelor to the Irish Washerwoman," says Piper. It is a document in jig time.


My name is Frank Bo - lar 'nole bach - 'lor I am, I'm
My house it is built of the na - tion - al soil, The
keep - in' ole bach on an el - e - gant plan. You'll find me out West in the
walls are e - rect - ed ac - cord - ing to Hoyle, The roof has no pitch but is
Coun - ty of Lane, . . Starv - ing to death on a gov - ern - ment claim;
lev - el and plain And I al - ways get wet when it hap - pens to rain.
Refrain
But hur - rah for Lane Coun - ty, the land of the free, The
home of the grass - hop - per, bed - bug, and flea, I'll sing loud her prais - es and
boast of her fame While starv - ing to death on my gov - ern - ment claim.

2 My clothes they are ragged, my language is rough,
My head is case-hardened, both solid and tough;
The dough it is scattered all over the room
And the floor would get scared at the sight of a broom;
My dishes are dirty and some in the bed
Covered with sorghum and government bread;
But I have a good time, and live at my ease
On common sop-sorghum, old bacon and grease.

Refrain:
But hurrah for Lane County, the land of the West,
Where the farmers and laborers are always at rest,
Where you've nothing to do but sweetly remain,
And starve like a man on your government claim.

* Carl Sandburg, American Songbag, pp. 120--122 under title "Lane County Bachelor."

3 How happy am I when I crawl into bed,
And a rattlesnake rattles his tail at my head,
And the gay little centipede, void of all fear
Crawls over my pillow and into my ear,
And the nice little bedbug so cheerful and bright,
Keeps me a-scratching full half of the night,
And the gay little flea with toes sharp as a tack
Plays "Why don't you catch me?" all over my back.

Refrain:
But hurrah for Lane County, where blizzards arise,
Where the winds never cease and the flea never dies,
Where the sun is so hot if in it you remain
'Twill burn you quite black on your government claim.

4 How happy am I on my government claim,
Where I've nothing to lose and nothing to gain,
Nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
Nothing from nothing is honest and square.
But here I am stuck, and here I must stay,
My money's all gone and I can't get away;
There's nothing will make a man hard and profane
Like starving to death on a government claim.

Refrain:
Then come to Lane County, there's room for you all,
Where the winds never cease and the rains never fall,
Come join in the chorus and boast of her fame,
While starving to death on your government claim.

5 Now don't get discouraged, ye poor hungry men,
We're all here as free as a pig in a pen;
Just stick to your homestead and battle your fleas,
And pray to your Maker to send you a breeze.
Now a word to claim-holders who are bound for to stay:
You may chew your hard-tack till you're toothless and gray,
But as for me, I'll no longer remain
And starve like a dog on my government claim.

Refrain:
Farewell to Lane County, farewell to the West,
I'll travel back East to the girl I love best;
I'll stop in Missouri and get me a wife,
And live on corn dodgers the rest of my life.

This song goes under many titles, "Government Claim", "Hurrah for Greer County", "Lane County Bachelor" and is found all the way from Canada to Arizona.

Vocabulary
government claim- 160 acres under the Homestead Act
Doyle - according to the correct method
corn dodgers - cakes made of fried corn-meal mush
hardtack - biscuit or bread made of flour without salt and water

Continued from p. 47

acorns and the women dressed their families in gunnysacks and buffalo hides. Then roaring down on the hot wind came prairie fires scorching the whole country black." ALan Lomax, Folksong USA pp 226-7

In the small towns the church bells pealed out the alarm of a prairie fire. It was the unwritten law that upon the outbreak of a fire every able-bodied man should come with fire-fighting equipment to help extinguish the blaze. The man who slept while the neighbors fought fire all night was considered a traitor or slacker. ADela Elizabeth Richards Orpen wrote of her experiences in Kansas while a girl:

> The darkness that follows the going out of a prairie fire is something portentous. From being the center of a lurid glare you are suddenly plunged into the bottom of a bucket of pitch. Nothing reflects any light and there is nothing to steer by. You don't know where you are nor where the house is; everything is black. Your throat is full of ashes and you can hardly breathe for the choking of the fluff in the air. If you call to your nearest pal on the back firing line the chances are that he or she has moved away and may be half a mile distant. You feel like you are the last survivor in a horrible world of cinders and blackness.

At length a welcome shout is heard - in our case it was my father hailing us and bidding us gather in. And so once more the fire danger is over and we may rest." Memories of the Old Emigrant Days in Kansas 1862-65 London 1926, pp.72-73.

1874 was the grasshopper year. It had been a lovely spring and summer for crops. Late in July, S.C. Bassett, a native of Buffalo county, Nebraska, tells how his family had sat down to dinner on a bright, sunny day. Gradually, the sky became darkened and the meal so happily begun, was never finished.

The insects came like a driving snow, filling the air, covering the earth, the buildings, the shocks of grain and everything. They sounded like a continuing hailstorm as they alighted on the roofs and sides of the houses. Their weight broke off large branches of trees.

At times they were 4 to 6 inches thick on the ground and continued to alight for hours. They gathered so thickly on the warm rails of the Union Pacific that they stopped the trains. People covered their crops with bedclothes and blankets. The insects ate holes in the bedclothes and destroyed everything. Piling hay or straw on the crops and building smudge fires proved useless. A heavy rain drowned millions, but more just came. Men with clubs walked down the corn rows knocking the hoppers off, but on looking back, they were as thick as ever. Corn stalks and potato vines were mashed flat. The sound of the insects' feeding was like a herd of cattle eating in a corn field. When a few hours later, the insects left, the whole country was a scene of vast ruin and desolation. They came in 1875, 1876 and 1877, but never again like the scourge they were in 1874. Everett Dick, The Sod-House Frontier, pp.204-6

In the winters, homesteaders faced another ordeal, the dreaded blizzards and unbearable subzero temperatures.

The great blizzard of 1888 in Kansas, the Dakotas and Nebraska is sometimes called the "School Children's Storm." The morning of January 12th dawned clear, warm and bright and the children started cheerfully off to school. BEfore long, a 56 mile wind was blowing and the temperature dropped to 36 below zero. Children coming home from school were caught. Parents coming after their children lost their way and were frozen. Many heroic deeds of school teachers are recorded. Many, knowing the children could not reach their homes, stayed in the schoolhouse for one or two nights, encouraging and caring for them through the long weary hours until relief came. Others had the members of their little groups hold hands and forming a living chain, guided the little ones to a neighboring house.

After three days, the sun came out. Parents and children, husbands and wives were happily reunited. But two hundred persons, many of them little children, had lost their lives. The Sod-House Frontier, pp. 228-230***

Sometimes, the battle against nature just wore the settlers down. Many people quit and went back East. The sides of their covered wagons were ornamented with humorous but bitter slogans: "From Sodom , where it rains grasshoppers, fire and devestation." "Going East to visit my wife's relations."

***For a vivid description of the blizzards of 1886 and 1887 that covered the Dakotas down to Texas and wiped out cowboys, ranchers and cattle, see Laurence Seidman, Once In The Saddle: The Cowboy's Frontier:1866-1896, Chapter VIII.

Little Old Sod Shanty

The surprising thing is not that so many pioneers failed to establish going commercial farms in the 1860's and 1870's or fell heavily in debt. The remarkable thing is that so many of them succeeded. Farming had always been a risky business, uncertain and sometimes heartbreaking. Especially for a pioneer farmer without adequate resources or finances.

While wheat was the main crop and did well in Dakota and Minnesota, most pioneer farmers diversified and raised oats, barley, rye, corn, flax, potatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, hogs, horses and poultry.

Food was limited in variety and freshness. Highly monotonous and unappetizing diets were the rule. Coffee was a staple item. Often coffee substitutes were used such as parched barley, rye or wheat, okra seeds, dried carrots. At first game was plentiful, but soon decreased. Few hogs were available, and salt pork was a large part of the meat diet, as were turnips, wild fruits and nuts. There was no sugar, so wild honey, and sorghum molasses were used. The farm woman had to be resourceful. Mattie Oblinger, whose husband, Uriah and brother Giles homesteaded in Fillmore County, Nebraska in 1872, wrote home to her sister in Indiana:

> You do not know how many things a person can do without until they try. Yesterday morning I thought I would have some cakes for dinner. I was going to make Jumbles but Giles had no rolling pin or cake cutter, so I made a plate of pancakes as we always turn it well. I had no eggs but I thought I would try it without. I tell you what I used - nearly a teacup of sugar, about half teacup of cream filled up with water, a small lump of butter and a little soda, enough flour to make(the batter) quite stiff- and I never made better pancakes in my life. Try it sometimes. I make pancakes altogether without eggs. We used to think that if we had no eggs we could not make pancakes, but I have got bravely over that.
>
> Nebraska Pioneer Cookbook, Ed. Kay Graber 1974

The Nebraska Farmer, after stating that a dollar's worth of corn is more nourishing than two dollars worth of wheat, or four dollars worth of potatoes, listed thirty-three different ways of serving corn, including: corn dodgers, samp, spoonbread, apple corn bread, johnnycake or corn bread, corn muffins, corn cake, hoe cake, corn griddle cake, corn on the cob, pumpkin loaf, baked Indian pudding, Indian dumplings and corn whiskey. January 1862

In the plains where timber was scare, the first shelter was often a dugout, cut into the side of a hill or gully. A fourteen foot square dugout could be built in 1872 for $2.78¼.

One window (8x10 glass--a luxury)	$1.25
18 ft. of lumber for front door	.54
Latch and hanging (nolock)	.50
Length of pipe to go through roof	.30
3 lbs of nails to make door	.19¼

(Everett Dick, Sod House Frontier

The sodhouse was more satisfactory and would last about 6 to 7 years. The usual sodhouse was about 16ft wide and 20 ft long. The sod bricks were made by turning over furrow on about half an acre of ground where the sod was thickest and strongest. A spade was used to cut the sod into bricks about 3 ft long. These sod bricks were placed side by side around the foundation except where the door was to be made.

The cracks were then filled with dirt and two more layers were placed on these. Every third course was laid crossiwse to the others to bind them together. The process was continued until the wall was high enough to put a roof on the structure. A door frame, and two window frames were set in the wall and the sod built around them at the proper time.

The little sod cabin was frequently divided into two rooms by a piece of rag carpet or quilt. The windows and doors were closed with buffalo robes or other blankets. The house was crudely furnished. A nail keg and a soap box did duty as chairs. A dry goods box made a table and a rude bed of boards was fashioned in the corner.

Sod houses had many faults. Little light or ventilation. It was hard to keep clean. Roofs oten leaked. It use to drip for three days after the rain was over and had to place pots and pans all over to catch the water. One pioneer woman remembers frying pancakes with someone holding an umbrella over her and the stove. After a heavy rain all the bed clothes and wearing apparel were hung out to dry.

It also had many advantages. It was cheap, easy to construct with your bare hands and fast to put up. The wind couldn't blow it down and there was no fear of fire.

Sometimes in a havey rain , the roof caved in or the walls collasped. In spring, the roof would burst into bloom of live prairie grasses and flowers. You had to watch that your livestock did not climb up on your roof to graze, and crash through it into your room below.

This song was found throughout the American and Canadian West. It is an adaptation of an older, popular Eastern song, "The Little Old Log Cabin In The Lane," written by Will S. Hays in 1871. This was a Black melody of the type popularized by Stephen Foster's "My Old Kentucky Home" or "Swanee River." The version on the next page is from Alan Lomax's Folk Songs of North America, pp. 397-8.

A SOD DUGOUT WITH ADJOINING SHED

The most primitive type of sod dwelling. The wagonload of sod at the rear of the dugout is to repair the roof. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Little Old Sod Shanty

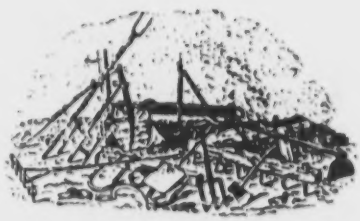
Steadily ♩ = 108

GUITAR- 2A
BANJO- 1, 2

E
E7
A
E
I am look-ing ra - ther seed - y now while hold-ing down my claim, And my
B7
E
vic-tuals are not al-ways of the best; And the mice play shy - ly
E7
E
B7
round me as I ne - tle down to rest, In my lit-tle old sod shan-ty in the
E
A
E
West. The hin-ges are of lea-ther and the win-dows have no glass, While the
B7
E
board roof lets the howl-ing blis-zards in, And I hear the hun-gry coy-ote as he
A
E
B7
E
slinks up through the grass, Round my lit - tle old sod shan-ty on my claim.

2 Yet I rather like the novelty of living in this way,
Though my bill of fare is always rather tame,
But I'm happy as a clam on the land of Uncle Sam
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.
But when I left my eastern home, a bachelor so gay,
To try and win my way to wealth and fame,
I little thought I'd come down to burning twisted hay
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.

3 My clothes are plastered o'er with dough, I'm looking like a fright,
And everything is scattered round the room,
But I wouldn't give the freedom that I have out in the West
For the table of the eastern man's old home.
Still I wish some tender woman would pity on me take,
And relieve me from the mess that I am in;
The angel, how I'd bless her, if this her home she'd make
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.



4 And we would make our fortunes on the prairies of the West,
Just as happy as two lovers we'd remain;
We'd forget the trials and troubles we endured at the first,
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.
And if fate should bless us with now and then an heir,
To cheer our hearts with honest pride of fame,
O then we'd be contented for the toil that we had spent
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.

54

Memories of Music on the High Plains

by Sheldon Brown

I was born and raised in the extreme northwest portion of Nebraska. My childhood and youth were spent in a rural economy, farming and ranching. My greatgrandparents on my mother's side homesteaded in NW Nebraska in 1885. William Sheldon Manchester and his wife, Mollie, had eight children, including my grandfather, Powell Griffith (Babe) born in 1888. My maternal grandmother, Lottie Strong, was also born in this area in 1893. My father's folks came from a small farm in Missouri and settled on a small farm in the same community, Deadhorse Creek, in 1920. I was born into this agricultural setting in 1931. Most were involved in farming and raising cattle. Thus, I lay claim to a relatively long heritage of high plains farming and ranching. Winter wheat, some small grains (oats and barley) and cattle were the main produce.

In addition to the usual memories of life on the farm, riding saddle horses, swimming in the creek, making ice cream from hand-powered freezers and ice from underneath sawdust in the ice house, I remember my maternal greatgrandmother's stories of early life on the frontier. I was fortunate to have her survive past 90 years of age. She remembered Red Cloud of the Ogalla Sioux and told stories of small bands camping on the creek and asking for flour, bacon and tobacco. She told of the covered wagon trip out from Illinois which she started with a small cask of molasses cookies. Whenever a child was upset on the trip, she related how she would reach in and get a cookie for them. My great-aunt, Mrytle Longcore, would join in the story, indicating how hard those cookies became by the time they arrived in Western Nebraska. Writing of this reminds me how delicious Granny Manchester's sugar cookies were. There was always the faint flavor of bacon in them. I'm sure she used meat drippings for shortening. Little was wasted in those households.

While I could continue to dredge up these random memories, both pleasant and unpleasant happenings, I'd like to recall the music that was part of their lives, and subsequently my life. I don't believe that any of my remembered ancestors were greatly talented musically. However, some were perhaps more than adequate and most, in my judgement, were enthusiastic.

Fond memories include my father playing a guitar and teaching me to sing the verses of "Strawberry Roan," "Little Joe the Wrangler," and "I Ain't Got No Use for Women." I often accompanied my parents to dances in rural school houses and, after times got better, to the local Odd Fellows Hall. In those days, children almost always accompanied the parents. Baby-sitters, unless it was an unpaid relative, were unknown. In my mind's eye, I can still see the benches around the walls of the hall adorned with sleeping infants and children and a few quite elderly grandmas and grandpas. Those from age ten to seventy tended to be on the floor each and every set, whether it was a square dance, with tunes like "Red Wing," "Old Dan Tucker," or "Buffalo Gals," a two-step to "San Antonio Rose," or a waltz to a beautiful old tune like "Over the Waves." It was also common to see fathers, mothers, or other adult relatives dancing with the children. Sometimes, earlier in the evening, the smaller children and infants were carried between the father and mother as they danced. This is how we learned to dance. It must be admitted that some of the men would frequently go to the coat room or out to the cars. It wasn't until I was older that I found out why. One place we were allowed was the kitchen area. It was here that a few of the women, again generally the older ones, made coffee and set out sandwiches, pies and cakes in preparation for the inevitable midnight lunch. As children we could usually count on an early start on the food if we were enough of a nuisance in the kitchen. In the 1930's era, the food was brought from the homes of the dancers, each contributing something with no money exchanging

hands. To this day, I am not sure how, or even if, anybody kept score. Later, by the 1940's, conditions had improved economically and some group, such as the school mothers, prepared the food and charged people twenty-five cents or thereabouts. Perhaps strict accounting was less important in those times when generous people shared what they had. And it might also be noted that, at least in my memory, the celebrants were either relatives or neighbors.

As I write this, a particular memory of a school-house dance and pie social perks to the top of my mind. I guess I must have been five or six at the time. The part that is so vivid revolves around the way the pies were distributed. As readers may know, the typical procedure was for women to bring pies (or box lunches) to be auctioned off during the festivities. The successful bidder then had the pleasure of sharing the pie with the woman who brought it. In the recalled event there was no bidding with money. (I figgured it out years later that this was done because of the Depression.) Rather, a curtain was drawn across the back part of the school house with only a single light behind the curtain left burning. All the women gathered in the lighted part with their pies. In turn, each would step forward against the backside of the curtain with their pie. Standing sideways, a nice silhouette could be seen by the prospective men bidders. The first man to guess the name of the observed woman was the winner and was invited to eat the pie with her. On the first lady to be silhouetted, I, along with some other youngsters, immediately informed the men that it was my Aunt Alice. We had been running back and forth between the two groups and heeded no silhouette for identification. Needless to say, our breaking of the rules was corrected in a way that probably contributes much to the clarity with which I recall the event.

Besides the music made and enjoyed by families and friends at dances, on quiet Sunday afternoons or during some evenings, we eventually got a radio. I guess that first one was around 1939. And of course, most in our country were battery-operated. The Rural Electrification Administration didn't reach us for another ten years. The radio brought the "Carter Family," the Monroe Brothers, Roy Acuff, and others into our homes. And, of course, the songs they sang and the styles they used soon became part of our own repertoire. "Great Speckled Bird" and "Wabash Cannonball,""Sunny Side of the Street," and "Nobody's Darling," come quickly to mind. Concomitantly, we were picking up songs from the Saturday western moves of Gene Autry, Judy Canova, and later, Roy Rogers. And while we couldn't attend movies as much as we wanted, we could afford some- even in the 1930's.

In retrospect, the music served a useful function for us. Along with other folk arts, it gave us enjoyment and a means of expression to what otherwise might have been essentially unrelieved bleakness. I do not wish to paint a picture of gloom and despair, nor do I wish to indulge in nostalgic romanticism. Times were difficult, but as human being are so often able to do, we adapted. Our music contributed in some measure to our survival and growth. Consequently, as we seek to help our students more realistically and sympathetically understand people in other times, places and circumstances, we would do them a service to attend, at least briefly, to the music made and enjoyed by ordinary folks.

Skip to My Lou

This was one of the most popular play-party songs in days gone by, and was known throughout the country. To this day, children still skip to it in the streets and playgrounds. Such songs had a special use in frontier communities where revivalist influences were strong. In such communities, says one authority:

> . . . they got around the churches' opposition to square and round dancing by holding play parties, in which they took over the singing games of children, with their skipping, dancing, and marching movements. In these, boys and girls swung one another by the hand and not by the waist, which was forbidden. And thus, since the fiddle was considered the devil's instrument and other musical instruments were scarce, they got along without musicians and callers, giving their own directions for the dance movements by means of the words of the song.*

In "Skip to My Lou," all couples join hands, skip left or right singing the chorus; a lone boy in the center of the ring sings "Lost my partner, what'll I do?" as the group circles, then picks a girl and takes her hand; her first partner goes to the center of the ring as the group sings the chorus, etc.

John Anthony Scott, The Ballad of America, p. 167.

*Russell Ames, *The Story of American Folk Song* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap; 1955), 65-66.

2. I'll get another one prettier than you (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

3. Little red wagon, painted blue (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

4. Fly in the sugar-bowl, shoo shoo shoo (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

5. Cows in the cornfield, two by two (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

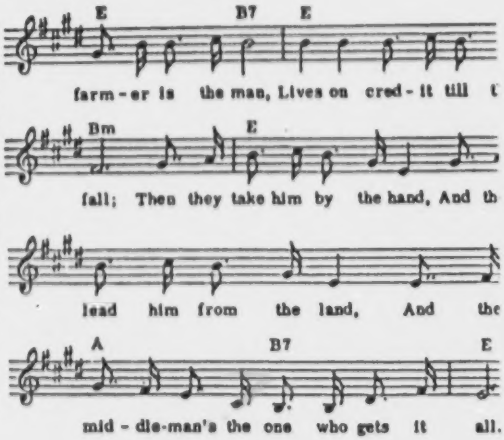
6. Skip, skip, skip to my lou (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

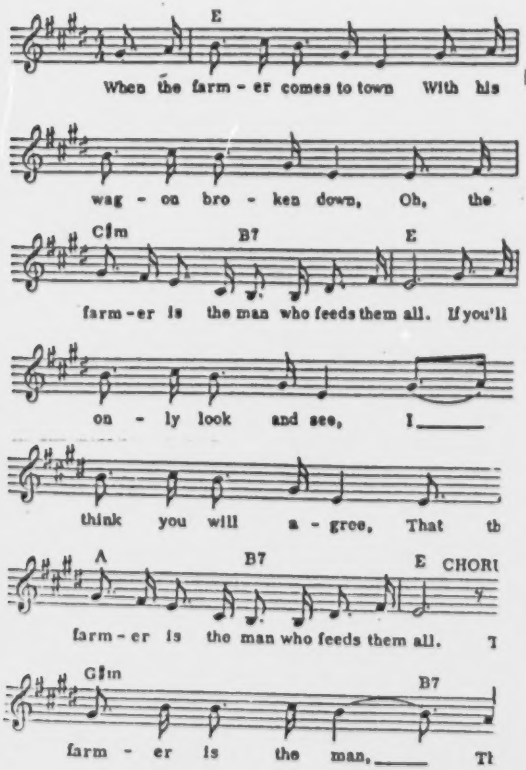
7. Skip a little faster, that won't do (three times)
   Skip to my lou, my darling.
   Chorus

The Farmer is the Man

The period from the early 1870's to the middle 1890's was one of great unrest among Western and Southern farmers, but primarily among pioneer farmers on the wheat-producing frontier, in the vast new prairie states of the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Montana. Declining prices for wheat and cotton on the world market coupled with the extortionate practices of railroads, speculators, and middlemen, combined to produce a series of political explosions among the farmers that culminated in the Populist movement of 1890–1896. Many songs were produced by the farmers who were both musical and militant. Among the best known is "The Farmer Is the Man," an anonymously composed ditty that reflects Jeffersonian sentiments about the primary importance and worth of the farmer in society. The song expresses, in musical form, the famous phrase uttered by William Jennings Bryan in his 1896 "Cross of Gold" speech:

. . . The great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.


E B7 E
farm-er is the man, Lives on cred-it till t
Bm E
fall; Then they take him by the hand, And th
lead him from the land, And the
A B7 E
mid-dle-man's the one who gets it all.


E
When the farm-er comes to town With his
wag-on bro-ken down, Oh, the
C#m B7 E
farm-er is the man who feeds them all. If you'll
on-ly look and see, I
think you will a-gree, That th
A B7 E CHORU
farm-er is the man who feeds them all. T
G#m B7
farm-er is the man, Th

When the lawyer hangs around,
While the butcher cuts a pound,
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all.
When the preacher and the cook
Go strolling by the brook
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all.

Chorus

When the banker says he's broke
And the merchant's up in smoke,
They forget that it's the farmer feeds them all.
It would put them to the test
If the farmer took a rest;
Then they'd know that it's the farmer feeds then

Chorus: The farmer is the man,
The farmer is the man,
Lives on credit til the fall;
With the interest rate so high,
It's a wonder he don't die,
For the mortgage man's the one who gets it all

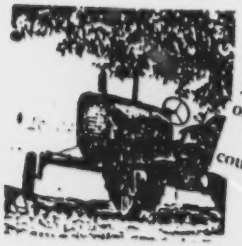
*Tony Scott, The Ballad of America: The History of the US, In Song & Story, p. 267

The generations of farm families who have been committed to their life on the land have developed a special relationship with the natural world — a relationship that has shaped their way of thinking and molded their pattern of existence.

Describing the farm where he had spent most of his life, an Oregon dairy farmer said, "If I had to tell you how I feel about my land I don't know as I could put it into words. I know this land so well, I've lived with it so long — it's like it's grown to be a part of me. It's like my own arms or legs.

"In my mind I feel my land is always wanting me, needing me. And when I go out to work, I feel that's where I want to be and where I should always ought to be . . . That's the closest I could come to telling you . . ."

"This earth is God's earth," said a small southern farmer. "Yes, we work it, we care for it, we own it. But it belongs to the Lord. That's why it smells so good and looks so fine. We come from it, and we go to it. It's the beginning and the end."



Recalling his childhood and his friendship with his father, an Illinois farmer said:

"I liked being around him [my dad]. It was fun learning to do things I saw him doing, to respect him and what he was doing, and I'd want to learn the job, too. Then the day came when he'd let me do something. Then in a year I'd be a little older and he'd start me in on something new . . .

"I had other friends, other kids around the country. But Dad was my best friend."

POPULIST SONG In 1890 campaign of debt-ridden Kansas Farmers

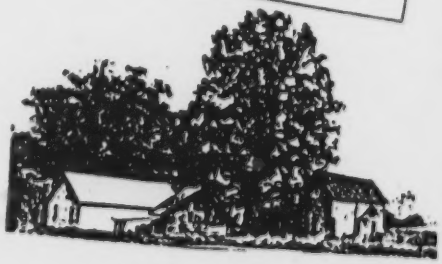
My country tis of thee,
Once Land of Liberty,
Of thee I sing.
Land of the millionaire,
Farmers with pockets bare,
Caused by the cursed snare .
The Money Ring.

For a large segment of the nation's farmers, dependence upon cash crops and foreign markets did not bring prosperity. Instead, it brought an endless struggle to beat low prices. It brought increasing indebtedness, insecurity, and a rapid rise in farm tenancy.

In the 1890s, one Texas cotton farmer wrote: "The same old Tale of years is the Cotton Gone, the money is all gone, two. One great Discouragin fact here is so many Farmers dont own theire Farms . . .

"Every agent, pedlar, and Every profession of men is Fleecing the Farmer, and by the time the World Gets their Liveing out of the *Farmer* . . . we the Farmer has nothing Left, but a Bear Hard Liveing. I live in the midst of a thick Heavey populated country of Farmers 6 miles from any Town and talk Freely with them as to how much they make. And all tell me the same Hard Tale money all gone . . .

"We have a working Energetic people that would improve if they could and Farmers in these two countys is successful in Farming. We all make it but some way we cant Keepe it . . ."



"Nothing interests the people of this community more than the price of wheat," declared a Minnesota minister in 1866.

"Men work in wheat all day when it does not rain, lounge around talking about wheat when it is wet, dream about wheat at night and I fear go to meeting Sabbath day to think about wheat."

Quotes taken from:
The American Farm: A Photographic History
by Maxie and Richard Conrat
1977

Suicide for a Farmers' Banker

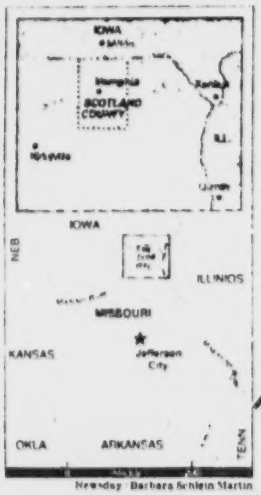
New York Times

EAGLE BEND, Minn., Dec. 28 (AP) — A man who had worked in a local bank for a decade moved to a new job in Wisconsin when it became too hard for him to tell his farmer friends that they were in financial trouble.

But things were no better there, so the banker, Sheldon Stevenson, came back, and on a Sunday afternoon this month he committed suicide.

"I don't know if you've ever had the experience of sitting across from a farmer and wife and telling them it's the end of the ropes, that everything they've worked for is down the drain," said Roger Larson, vice president of the Citizens State Bank, where Mr. Stevenson had worked.

"It's a gut-eating job."



Newsday Barbara Schlein Martin

Hard Times Producing Lost Farm Generation

Newsday Jan. 12, 1986

Pestilence of Debt Moves Beyond Farm

Monday Jan. 13, 1986

59

The Family Farm Goes Under
Farmers Home Administration Loans
Newsday Jan. 12

Farmer Groups Seen Affecting 1986 Elections

100 to 150 Are Created With 'Populist' Aims

By KEITH SCHNEIDER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4 — The economic crisis gripping rural America has given rise to dozens of politically active farm groups that could influence the results of this year's Congressional elections.

Farming's Lost Generation

By Dallas Gatewood
Knight-Ridder Newspapers Staff Correspondent

Jan. 12, 1986
MEMPHIS, MO.

Parents' Misfortune, Uncertainty of Next 5 Years Demoralize Would-Be Farmers

Georgia Farmer Valued Land More Than Life

By DUDLEY CLENDINEN
Special to The New York Times

WAYNESBORO, Ga., Feb. 6 — Like farmers throughout the South, L. D. Hill was raised on the morality of the Bible, the ethic of hard work, and the obligation to pay your bills on time.

He treasured his land, the source of his identity and his means. He borrowed on it. And Tuesday morning, when he could find no other way to raise the money to keep it from being sold at public auction at 11 A.M. on the courthouse steps, he handed his wife his life insurance policies, walked into the bedroom of their mobile home and shot himself to death.

When their son Leonard rushed in, Annabel Hill told him to call the Production Credit Association and have the sale stopped. "Daddy has given his life to pay his debts," she said.

"Where the Scripture says, 'Owe no man anything,' that was his philosophy," Mrs. Hill said today as she sat at the kitchen table, surrounded by family before the funeral service. "And when this came up, that's why he couldn't face it. Because there was no way.

"I knew there was nothing I could do for him," said Mrs. Hill, a woman of softly tinted hair and quiet composure reinforced by her faith. "But I knew he wanted that sale stopped."

'It's a time of turmoil. Our employment is 10 to 15 years away from 1979 levels.'
—Harvey Siegelman

Desperation in the Farm Belt

Newsday Jan. 19, 1986

Follow-up Ideas for Your Students

1. Compare the life of a farmer with that of the cowboy, fur trapper, buffalo hunter.

. Why was frontier life so hard? Was the main struggle against man or nature? Explain an document your answers.

. Using clay or packed down dirt, make sod bricks and build a model sod house.

. REview American land policies"English government towards the 13 colonies; the Ordinance of 1787; federal land policies today.

. Many famous Americans, ex., George Washington, others, were land speculators. Explain their feelings and dealings. How did they hope to get rich from land? What were the policies of the Dutch patroons in the Hudson Valley?

. Read Daniel Webster and the Devil. Find and read American and other folktales at tell how the people outwitted the Devil or the Evil One.

. Choose one of the above tales and dramatize it - as a puppet show or with real-life actors.

. Locate on a map of the U.S. the midwest and western states of the prairies and Great Plains. Locate major rivers, cities, and your own towns and villages.

. Invite a farmer in to talk with your class. Ask him to discuss his problems, concerns, pleasures at being a farmer. Would he advise young people to become farmers today? Why or why not?

10. Interview older relatives, acquaintances. Ask them to tell about their remembrances of their childhood and farmlife. Put them on tape.

11. Make a model of a homesteader's 160 acre farm-out of wood, dirt, sawdust, etc. His house, barn, fields, wagons, animals, well, etc..

12. Imagine yourself a frontier farmer in the 1860's. Keep a diary, write down your observations of the weather, problems, joys, neighbors, world around you.

13. Pretend you're a newspaper reporter from back East. You are out West to see how the news settlers are doing. Interview some of them and sum up your observations and reflections. What advice would you give to prospective immigrants?

14. Paint group murals showing scenes from a farmer's life. Could be the four seasons, or social events around the year--barnraising, cornhusking, quilting, etc.

15. Through newspapers, TV , farm journals, farm council meetings and by inviting speakers find out what are some of the problems small farmers are facing today. What are the state, county and locla farm groups doing to solve them?

16. Make a list of proverbs, weather sayings, superstitions that revolve around farm life. Illustrate as many as possible.

17. Ask the gym teacher, local folk dance club or enthusiast, to teach you some playparty dances or square dances. Local librarian may have materials also.

18. Make an appointment with local supermarket manager. Prepare your class and take them to visit store. Let them list all the foods in the store and attempt to identify from label, can, wrapper where each comes from. At school on map of world, locate your community and indicate on map where each product comes from. Ex. Portuguese sardines-cut off small piece of label and paste on Portugal.

Bibliography

Teachers:

Bartlett, Richard, The New Country: A Social History of the American Frontier 1776-1890. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974

Conlat, Masie and Richard, The American Farm: A Photographic History, California Historical Society, San FRancisco:Houghton, Mifflin, 1977. A gorgeous, informative, oversize book.Through a skillful combination of photographs and thought-provoking text, The American Farm depicts the profound transformation that the family farm is undergoing.

Dick, Everett, The Sod House Frontier1854-1890:A Social History of the Northern Plains. D. Appleton-Century Co., New York 1937. A classic, not to be missed.

Fite, Gilbert C., The Farmer's Frontier 1865-1900. Holt, Rinehart, 1966.

Children AND Older Students

Brink, CArol, Caddie Woodlawn. Newbury AWard, 1936.Farm life in Wisconsin
Cleaver, Vera and Bill, Dust Of The Earth.Farming in South Dakota.
Conrad, Pam, Prairie Songs 1986. Life in a sod house on Nebraska prairies.
Edmonds, Walter, Bert Breen's Barn.
McBride, Mary Margaret, The Growing Up of Mary Elizabeth. Personal recollections of a 12 year old girl on a Missouri farm in 1910.
Turner, Ann, Dakota Dugout, 1986 Life on the Dakota plains recalled.
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, All of her nine books--a timeless saga about pioneer farm life.

If you haven't read them, do so. They are marvelous. Read them aloud to your students--worth every moment. They mirror the life and struggles of countless families who moved West to improve their chances for a good life.

More Follow-up Teaching Ideas:

Have your class read all of Laura Ingall Wilder's books in sequence. Then make a map of the USA. On the map trace her family's travels, indicating where each new home was located. Trace their path and the time it took them to make each journey. Indicate how Pa made a living and what happened to each member of the family. Class could do a puppet show.

Make an illustrated time line on the important events of Laura Ingall Wilder's life story. Make also a national time line to show what was going on in the country during each stage of her life in each book.

WAtch the TV show, Little House on the Prairie. Compare it with her book of the same era. Are the characters in the show "true" to the book?What makes the book and show so interesting? Write a letter to the TV producers with your thoughts. Suggest an episode that they might dramatize.

Great movie--PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS 25 min, b&w 1936. Social and economic history of Great Plains from settlement through the Dust Bowl. Available from National Audio Visual Center, Iowa State Univ, Univ. of Michigan.

Play-Party Song Book
Botkin, B.A., The American Play-Party Song, N.Y. 1963.

The Alliance and Labor Songster by Leopold Vincent, ARno Press:New York, 1975

BOOK and RECORD REVIEWS

CARRY IT ON: A HISTORY IN SONG AND PICTURE OF THE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF AMERICA, by Pete Seeger and Bob Reiser. New York:Simon & Schuster,1985.

Of recent years, teachers of history at both high school and college level have been focusing more upon social history in general and upon the history of working people in particular. For all such teachers, Pete Seeger's CarryIt On is a must. It provides songs about labor's struggle to organize in the 19th and 20th centuries, many of which will not be easily found in other sources. Music and lyrics are provided in large format; in terms of layout and clarity the presentation here is first-rate.THe large black and white photographs are magnificent.

One weakness of the book is the sparseness of background information provided about the songs and the absence of reference aparatus - the wealth of material nowavailable for the student of American labor is hardly hinted at in the short bibliography. There is no list of records or films available about workers and their songs. This ommission will need to be remedied in future editions in order to make this fine book a truly effective classroom resource. A large papreback edition is available for under $10.

WOMAN SONG is an enchanting, vibrant 12-inch record by Gerri Gribi, a former history teacher and now a professional folk musician who specializes in music by and about women. Gerri has a lovely voice and accompanies herself on the guitar, dulcimer and autoharp. She is backed up by three other musicians on most of the songs.

Gerri wrties "ten years ago while teaching a unit on women's history, I searched in vain for an album of appropriate music. Two years ago, I decided to produce that album myself. The record includes some contemporary and original folksongs in addition to the traditional ones. Among the traditional songs are: A Single Life, Which Side Are You On?, Cotton Mill Girls, When I Was A Fair Maid, Old Man In The Woods. A booklet with the words of each song and background comments are included.
Send to: Gerri GRibi
P.O. Box 8021 Green Bay, WI 54308

TOUCH THE PAST: A MUSICAL DIARY OF A PIONEER FAMILY'S JOURNEY WEST by ESther Kreek on the Hammered Dulcimer

Sponsored by the St. Joseph Musuem this collection of 22 traditional melodies popular along the westward wagon trails during the 1850's and '60's is a unique opportunity to study the past through music. Among the songs are : Amazing Grace, The Girl I Left BEhind Me, Paper of Pins, Billy Boy, The Old Brass Wagon, Blue Tail Fly, Wonderous Love and other songs. INcluded with the recurd is a fine booklet giving the music and lyrics for each song and a brief diary keyed to the music, relating the adventures and hardships typically encountered between St. Joseph, Missouri --where many wagon trains started out on their long trek to Oregon. The booklet also includes a diary, bibliography of the West and a listing of folksong books.

ESther Kreek of Oregon, Missouri is an accomplished musician and teacher and has given many workshops and demonstrations at educational conferences throughout the midwest. Seven other musicians and singers perform with her on this fine record. Available as either record or casette for $10 which includes postage and handling:
St. Joseph Musuem 11th & Charles Street
St. Joseph, MO 64501

THE MORGANS - SOUNDINGS FOR THE WHALE
A commemorative Educational Album

For anyone interested in our environment, conservation and the chain of life, this is a lively, beautiful

record. It is marvelous for the classroom on every grade level from K through 12. It celebrates the 10th anniversary of the the Sperm Whale Celebration. In 1975, the sperm whale was officially designated the Connecticut State animal by the State Legislature. This record should be in every school in every state to be played again and again.

This album presents a balance between traditional whaling songs and original whale celebration/conservation songs. Old ballads include: Greenalnd Whale Fishery, Farewell to Tarwathie, The Diamond, Rolling Home to Old New England. Anti-whaling songs celebrate the beauty and wonder of the whale and join in the world-wide movement to preserve, protect and study the whale, our fellow mammal.

A large informative booklet is included with background material and the words of each song. The Morgans are seven talented musicians, singers and songwriters who deserve a vote of thanks for producing this fine record. Order from:
The Morgans Tom Callinan
168 Shore Road Clinton, CT06413

Dulcimer News --Free Dulcimer Lending Library- Backyard Music will lend teachers a dulcimer and resource books free to try out in their classroom. After 90 days, UPS will pick up the items at no expense. Or you may purchase the books and dulcimer at a reduced price. For more info: Backyard Music P.O. Box 9047 New Haven,CT 06532
Also, put out newsletter Dulcimer Days.Ask for free copy.

A fine source of quality children 's records and cassettes is Chris Boyd, High Mountain Music 109 East Main St., Bozeman, MT59715 Send for your free catalog.Loaded with lots of records and cassettes from many companies. Many are especially suitable for younger children, but material here for all ages.

#43- Elizabeth Cady Stanton - 3 page background & short bibliography by Clare Wettemann to go with her song on p. 34. Send 2-22¢ stamps

#44- Studying U.S. History Through Songs, a 25 page section from Social Education, October 1985 written by Laurie Seidman, Sheldon Brown, Lee Cooper & George Chilcoat Covers folk, rock, popular and country music. Send 4-22¢ stamps

#45- 2 sets of lesson plans on Music and the Environment, a series used in Harris County, Texas 1976-1980 by Jim Kracht 4-22¢ stamps

#46 Assorted lesson plans for Farming Songs Send 3-22¢ stamps

#47 Assorted lesson plans of Railroad Songs Send 3-22¢ stamps

All of the previously issued 42 free materials are still available.For 1 to 15 articles, send us two 22¢ stamps for each article. For 16 to 42, send one 22¢ stamp for each article order(or check)

INDEX OF FARMERS' SONGS IN PAST ISSUES OF FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM

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Old Man Who Lived In the Woods	I:3-7
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Shanty Boy & The FArmer's Song	V:2-41
Wisconsin Emigrant	IV:1-7

An important source of science, ecology, and the environment and farmers is: American Farm Bureau Federation AG In The Classroom Program, Marsha Purcell, Director 225 Toughy Ave. Park Ridge, IL 60068 312-399-5764 Write or phone them. Lots of materials, ideas.

Two marvelous books to use: The Little House Cookbook: Frontier Foods from Laura Ingalls Wilder's Classic Stories by Barbara Walker,
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Volume VI #2
FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM
Laurence I. Seidman
140 Hill Park Avenue
Great Neck, New York 11021

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FOLKSONG IN THE CLASSROOM

A NETWORK OF TEACHERS OF HISTORY, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND THE HUMANITIES - A NEWSLETTER

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Editors
§John A. Scott
Fieldston School
(New York)
& Rutgers University
(New Jersey)
§Laurence I. Seidman
C. W. Post Center, Long Island University
(New York)

all communications to
Laurence I. Seidman
140 Hill Park Avenue
Great Neck, N.Y. 11021
516-466-8546

Advisory Panel
Sandy Behrend, *Art Teacher*
(New Jersey)
Bill Bonyan, *Folksinger*
(Maine)
Anna Fulhart
Elementary School Teacher
(Indiana)
Jenny Vincent Welles
Hispanic Folk Music Resource Person
(New Mexico)
J. Calvin Holsinger
Evangel College of Arts and Sciences
(Missouri)

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FUTURE ISSUES ---WE WELCOME YOUR HELP AND INPUT --- WE NEED YOU

The next issue, Volume VII #1, Fall, 1986, will be devoted to Teaching Our Democratic Constitution Through Songs.Thus we will celebrate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, 1987-8. Join us in this celebration by sending us your thoughts and experiences on teaching the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and the other ammendments with song. All ideas and suggestions are grist for our mill and we'll grind right along.

We -after six years of working closely together -- still think each one of us is brilliant, laugh at the other's jokes, listen to their latest version of an old ballad with a delighted ear, and love each other's company --But we could use some fresh blood.And some new jokes. And if you think you have troubles as a teacher, let us tell you about some of ours. You'll feel better immediately. Insult us, praise us, harrass us, cuddle us--but LET US HEAR FROM YOU. IS ANYBODY OUT THERE???

Your Illustrious Co-editors

Norv Blake Canton High School
1001 North Main Street
Canton, Illinois 61520

I just wanted to write you and compliment you on the quality of your session in Chicago. I was the fellow who asked several questions at the beginning of the workshop and then had to leave. I was also giving a session while in Chicago that dealt with the teaching of American History.

The only activity that I have never spent much time with while teaching American History is folk music. Your session convinced me that I should change this. I am looking forward to constructing several learning units that deal with folk songs this year.

****

Clare L. Wettemann R.D.#1
Box 83 Jordanville, New York 13361

During the past five years I have been performing historical folk music at schools, musuems, libraries, coffee houses and community events. My performance history is substantially longer than that, but it is during this period that I have come to appreciate folksong as a vehicle for understanding history, cultural differences and universal life questions.

Beginning in January 1986, I will be teaching three folk music courses at Cobleskill Technical Institute in Cobleskill,NY.

I will have a class graded K-3, another graded 4-6 and an adult group. With both groups, my performance and interpretation of folk songs will be the major material for the course. I play five stringed instruments and use rhythm instruments, some of which will be played by the children. The limberjack and related limber instruments are always enjoyed by children and adults alike. With the children I will also be doing some circle dances and simple contra dances.

I'm really looking forward to the chance to work with these groups for several weeks each!

****

Linda Austin 1110 S. Hayes
Enid, Oklahoma 73703

I received your complimentary issue on Whaling and I was thrilled with the information contained in the newsletter. I gave the presentation in a graduate class where I am working on my Master's Degree. The presentation was extremely successful!

Now I am subscribing for all past and present volumes. I am eager for this information and thank you for the terriffic source of materials you have been.

****

Cindy Krausgrill 913 Diablo Downs Drive
Clayton, California 94517

I am thoroughly enjoying your newsletter in my 1st-3rd grade music classes. I especially like the historical background given.

****

Johanna Beebe 3196 SR 103
Willard, Ohio 44890

I am an elementary music teacher, 1 through 6. As part of our heritage, I feel folk songs "say it all."

Especially in the upper grades, my theme is "Music Is Communication." In 4th we trace the history and the uniqueness of each part of our own country using folk songs. In 5th we trace world musics such as oriental, calypso, African and Polynesian. And in 6th we trace the history of country/western and pop music by beginning with folk music and folk instruments. In the first 3 grades we use a combination of Orff and Kodaly methods,which strongly advise using folk music to teach musical concepts.

Esther Kreek Oregon, MO 64473

The St. Joseph Musuem forwarded tour letter to me after they mailed you a record (ESther's record-see record reviews in last issue)I didn't know there was sucha newsletter. Where have you been?

A large part of my work is done in elementary schools. We just got back from St. Paul, MN. The Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation had their annual conference. MECC had a new computer porgram on the Oregon Trail. Over 1700 educators were there from U.S. and other countries. I was at the Oregon Trail booth in my 1850 costume playing music used along the Trail.

On the way to St. Paul, I presented some programs of traditional music using hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, spoons, limberjack, picking bow and vocals. I usually discuss the history of the instruments, the songs, the Oregon Trail and the Pony Express. If I have individual classes, I allow enough time for them to try the instruments. In assemblies, this is not possible.

****

Robbin Isaacson 2156 NW IRving #201 Portland, OR 97210

I'm very excited about FITC and have told other teachers about it - particularly those I know are musicians.

I particularly like the way you present music in the context of historical or social issues. Your articles and choices of subjects are good. The magazine makes me feel tuned in to another way of integrating all the senses in the learning experience.

****

Joyce Wiley 6 Dobbs Lane O'Fallon, MO 63366

I spent the summer two months in Australia and New Zealand with 30 other environmental educators. I collected many Australian songs and would love to mail copies to you. I also have an excellent book with the background of Waltzing Matilda. My music teachers atmy school has used it and is so impressed. I could loan this to you also.

Love your newsletter. I'm big on integrated curriculum. Iteach all subjects in 5th grade.

We camped for 28 days in the outback and sang around mant a campfire with seven Aussies.

****

Ross Altman 134 So. La Brea Ave.#4 Los Angeles, CA 90036

Thank you very much for your detailed explanation of the delay - I did receive them over the weekend and they are well worth the wait. Actually the long wait is not inappropriate to the package. Since most of the songs are from bygone days, I can simply imagine they were shipped by overland stage. What with all the potential hazards of such journeys I am thankful they got here at all.

You have really created a lasting treasure of useful materials tying folk music to the world in which it lives and to which it responds. I am very grateful for the effort that has gone into its creation. Coming from an academic background, I know how few are the really essential magazines, journals and newsletters that purport to fill a need and often just take up space. Yours is one of those essential few that really makes a difference. I am very happy to know about it and look forward to reading and using it in the future.

****

Janet Underhill Latin School of Chicago 1531 N. Dearborn Chi,IL

Thanks for asking about how we are using your publication. I'll tell you that I am using it a lot. I find the discussions so informative and the music so enjoyable. This past year we used "Paper of Pins" with great success in the 5th grade.

You suggested that I might send you a description of one of my own projects for possible publication. Here it is.

(continued on next page)

A Social Studies/Music Project in Colonial Music

by Janet Underhill

Our elementary school curriculum emphasizes the integration of social studies units in the classroom with the music, art, and science studies. It gives all of us who teach these "special" subjects an added dimension. Our partiicular challenge is to choose projects that forward the skills of our discipline, and, at the same time, to embed them in the larger context that is the social sudies unit. I find that when we do this, the children bring more to each subject. Their learning is richer and more comprehensive. Their motivation is stronger, and each separate study is more involving and pleasurable.

Here is one such project I put together to complement the fifth grade study of Colonial America. I change it from year to year in response to new material. Though the core remains the same, we add different songs or projects in response to student input, or inquiry, or interest.

First a word about our music program. We are lucky to have a full complement of Orff instruments, xylophones and glockenspiels. In addition, the fifth graders have been studying the soprano recorder since the third grade so they come to this unit with some facility already.

When I choose music projects, I am looking for material that will help develop the children's recorder skills, and that will give the students opportunities to make music in ensembles that include voice, the recorders, the xylophones, and various percussion instruments.

In addition, I believe that if we look at and perform the musiic of diferent cultures, different time periods, and different peoples, we can experience something of what it is like to be a part of that culture or time period, or group.

Now back to Colonial music. We do two projects. The first is a classical European minuet. For after all, the roots of American music reach across the sea to the courts of Europe. It is here that we get our harmony, our instruments, our musical forms. The minuet melody is a simple one in G major that the students learn to play on the recorder. It's range is an octave (d-d'). I wrote an accompaniment to be played on the xylophones. Once we have some skill playing this tune, we learn how to dance a simple minuet. The students can accompany the dancing, and we trade off being musicians and courtiers.

Our classroom discussion centers around such questions as: which Colonial Americans traveled frequently to Europe? Who could afford both the instruments and the time to learn how to play them? Who would be familiar with the court life of Western Europe? Which Americans would probably know the music of Mozart and Haydn? We talk about gentlemen farmers like George Washington. We talk about Benjamin Franklin's appointments as American Ambassador to the courts of Europe. We look at the customs and dress of European nobility. I brouse the library to find pictures of 18th century court dress and customs to show the students. We listen to minuets of Haydn and Mozart. Now that the movie "Amadeus" is out, what a wonderful musical and visual resource to show either in part or whole to the class.

As a couples dance, the minuet is perfect for this age group. While it requires couples, its formality requires only the touching of hands. The children always have a great deal of fun roll-playing as elegant ladies and gentlemen.

In contrast to this musical study of courtly life, or formality and elegance and wealth, we next learn a colonial folk song about three very mischevious, free-living characters. These fellows work for themselves at various Colonial trades; there is a tailor, a miller, and a weaver. They get into all sorts of trouble trying to make an easy living. Their pranks are properly punished but somehow everyone has a good time.

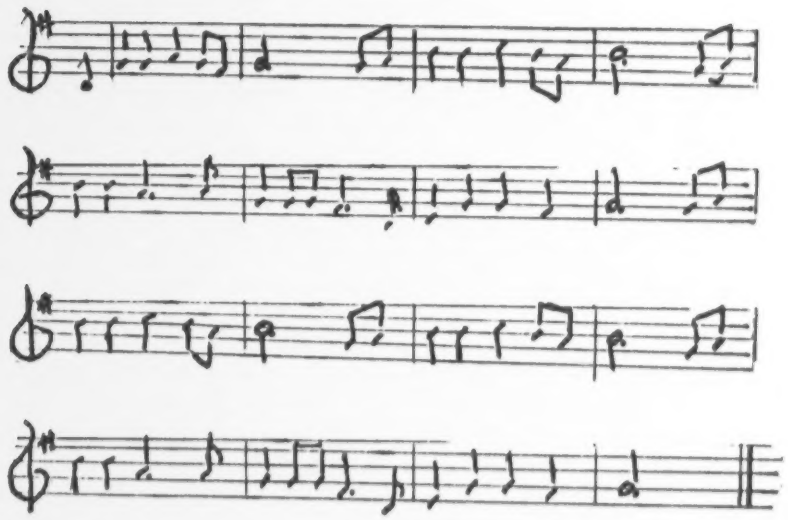
The students enjoy the story and usually have a good discussion fueled by their classroom studies, of the importance of skilled labor, and self-reliance, and a sense of humor in the new world. Because this song is in the "tall-tale" tradition, we sometimes entertain ourselves by reading other tall tales. Here is a non-to-be-missed opportunity for an experience in expressive reading. When we do this, exaggeration is the order of the day and so is much merriment.

Here again is a song that can be played on the recorder with autoharp accompaniment. The chords are simple. The tune has the same range (d-d') as our minuet. I include the tune, "Yankee Doodle" to be played between each verse of the song. Anybody who is having trouble learning the longer tune on the recorder is guaranteed success with this shorter one, and their contribution to the entire ensemble is equally valued.

One year, after learning this song, the students observed that these three rogues were a little like the three stooges, always getting into trouble. They suggested adding some sound effects. We choose a slap stick and a slide whistle to play between verses. Another year we might use the mouth and body sounds that the real "Three Stooges" used in their movies.

I have lots of musical resources to work with, but these songs and projects can be effectively done with no instruments except the students' voices. Instead of playing "Yankee Doodle" on the recorder, the students can whistle the tune between verses of "Good Old Colony Times." In fact there is a whole music lesson in just this idea of making music with no resources except one's own self. One year we supplemented this unit with the folk song, "Old Blue." After a discussion of what can be learned about Colonial life from this song, and based on the inspiration of an earlier discussion in this journal, we performed this song for our parents using no accompaniment except some clapping and body rhythm between the verses. It turned out to be one of our more successful project.

IN GOOD OLD COLONY TIMES

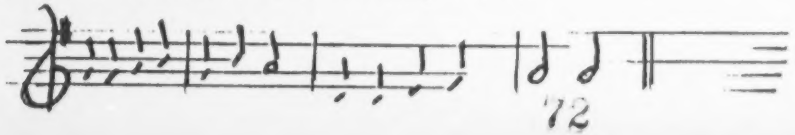


In good old colony times, when we were under the king.
Three roguish chaps fell into mishaps because they could not sing.
Because they could not sing. Because they could not sing.
Three roguish chaps fell into mishaps, because they could not sing.

The first, he was a miller. And the second, he was a weaver.
And the third he was a little tailor, three roguish chaps together.
Three roguish chaps together, Three roguish chaps together
And the third he was etc....

The miller he stole corn, and the weaver he stole yarn
And the little tailor stole broadcloth for to keep those three rogues warm.
To keep those three gorues warm, etc.....

The miller got drowned in his mill, The weaver got hung in his yarn.
And the devil clapped his claw on the little tailor
With the broadcloth under his arm.
With the broadcloth under his arm, etc....



Folk Songs of Papua, New Guinea
by Sister Duchesne Lavin

(Editors' Introduction)

All of us are aware that folk songs are international and every culture has their own songs and ballads. Sister Duchense has done folk-song collecting in Papua New Guinea and has published her work in a book called KADA KAKAILAI "Our Song". Her understanding and knowledge of folk song is so illuminating that we want to share her article with you, Everything Sister Duchense writes in her article applies to our efforts to preserve our folk song heritage and use it in our classrooms.

For about fifteen years I had the opportunity of working in Papua New Guinea, during which time my work took me into many different villages. When I first arrived in the country, I had no interest at all in the traditional music of the people. In fact, I could not understand how anybody could find pleasure listening to such rough and raucous music at all. As it appeared to me on first hearing, it sounded like the same noise being ceaselessly repeated. T-ankfully, my ignorant attitude soon changed when I realiged I was living in the middle of an almost unexplored musical 'gold mine'. It was not long before my right shoulder began to drop at a severe angle to my left, because I arrived at the stage of not going anywhere unless I had the tape recorder slung over my shoulder, not wanting to miss out on some recording opportunity.

Living in the country for such a long period, I was fortunate in being present at sing-sings and celebrations at the time of their performance and not when they were put on merely for professional musicologists to record Because I was attached to the Catholic Mission, I was not treated with suspicion, and the villagers often allowed me to hear and record music which until then had not been heard outside their particular village.

I always sought out the old men of the village who were a mine of information. Unfortunately, because of the language barrier, I was rarely able to speak with these people. I always had the help of one of the village teachers who were always anxious to be of assistance.

Sometimes when the old men or women were really in the mood, they would want to sit for hours singing for me. I always tired and gave up much sooner than they did. As I only had a cheap cassette recorder and no means of caring for or storing the tapes, the reproductions were of very poor quality. Apart from the mechanical deficiencies, most of the singing was accompanied by crowing roosters, barking dogs, crying and fighting children, friendly disputes between the people as to the most correct way of singing a particular song, the roar of the sea, rain on a tin roof, etc., etc., so in fact, with all the background interference, I was fortunate in being able to transcribe the songs as correctly as I did.

In many of the villages a tape recorder was something very new to the people and after they sang their song, they always wanted to hear it played back. This was very time consuming, as they insisted on hearing the entire song and not just part of it,as I often tried to get away with in the beginning. But it was a delight to see their faces light up on hearing their own voice come back from this strange talking machine. Everybody wanted to hear his own voice, even the young teenagers. I had trouble trying to explain to them that my interest was in the pure, traditional music and not in the modern string band songs of which they knew dozens.

Folk Songs of Papua, New Guinea continued

They would assure me they knew the 'real old' songs that had been sung in their village for years. After about half a dozen notes it was obvious they were singing "Old Lang Syne", "The Marines Hymn" or some other popular war song, the tune of which came into the country with the soldiers and was translated into the local language. These young people really believed they were singing their pure traditional music, because they had heard it sung in their village all their lives. Considering the war had been over for 35 years (since 1945) and the young people had grown up with these songs, it is understandable they think as they do.

I would like to share with you some thoughts onfolk music in general and the folk music of PNG in particular.

Singing is a natural and instinctive means of self-expression,as can be seen when we consider its extensive use among many races, of primitive people all over the world. Some of the f0lk music of PNG existed for hundreds of years before the coming of the professionally trained musician, and has continued to grow and develop over the years without his assistance. I t has been handed down orally by generations of unlettered people without musical training and with no knowledge of even the basic technicalities of music.

Folk songs are songs of the people or songs spontaneously created by the people. Sometimes they are composed by an individual, sometimes by a group, but always they commemorate personal experiences of every day life, or events of characters of local interest. They express the peoples' feelings, hopes and ideals and have been created wihtout any inhibitions and without the influence of rules for structure. They contain many beautiful melodies, their subject matter is varied and their rhythms sometimes irregular and complicated.

Folk song is not necessarily archaic but continues to develop and grow along with the development and growth of the people. It always develops in a land like PNG where conditions of life call for self-entertainment - where dancing is a social activity and is accompanied by singing and rhythmical drumming. These songs cover the traditions, customs and superstitions of the people.

Folk songs of any country are usually meaningless to a stranger, because they belong to the people who have made and sing them, and to whome they are full of meaning. It is only in recent years in PNG that songs from some areas are permitted to be sung in neighboring areas. Each tribe has its own songs and its own way of using music in its every day life. On the whole, the melody of the folk song is usually more profound than the words associated with it. Today, many of the words of the ancient folk songs have lost their significance because of their antiquity and often are meaningful only to those who make a serious study of anthropology or archaeology.

As these folk songs have, until recent years, depended solely on aural tradition for their preservation and development, it is to be expected that any particular song may be sung by a number of individuals with some slight variation in rhythm or melody at different times. T-ese variations may be due to the performer's memory failure or to his particular feeling or mood at the time of performing. Such variations or alterations are important aspects of any living tradition of folk song. Over the years the words of folk songs undergo great changes and the same melody canoften be found in various parts of the country with different words set to it. Where villages are close together, similiarities can be found in the songs, but if villages are distant, then the songs are usually quite different.and distinct.

The rhythms of these songs are often free and consequently when notated often have bars of different value or notes with long pauses.

Folk music is the composition of the race that produces it and expresses racial characteristics in a very definite way. This is the fact which gives the music of PNG such diversity and distinction, because there are so many different tribes living within the country, with each tribe having its own peculiar and individual way of expressing itself musically. Folk music forms an integral part in the life of a healthy nation. It penetrates all walks of life including the arts, education and the manifestation of social life. It is a known fact that when folk music is relegated to the background there is a degeneration in national life.

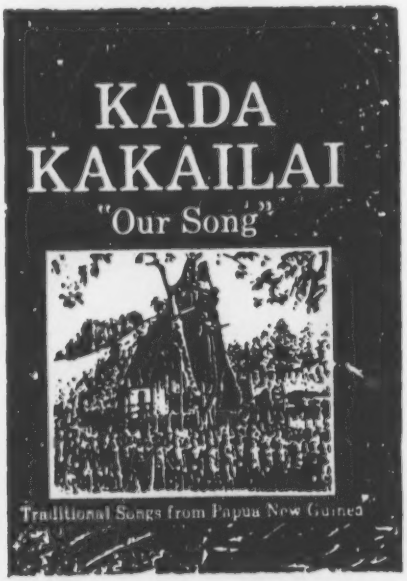
At present the way of life of the PNG people is in transition from an unwritten culture ot one of books and industries, but with intellectual development and the growth of book knowledge, aural tradition cannot be abandoned. The old and new will mix in many different ways, as can be clearly seen from even a brief look at the music of this country.

The young people lose their song tradition quickest because they are caught up in the change and progress of life in the towns. They are influenced by radio and films much more than those who remain in the villages.

European influence can be seen in a number of the songs. This influence will continue to grow as the spread of western and modern music throughout the country becomes greater. As the people change and accept new ways of life, so will their form of music change and develop in various ways in the future. There will always be a folk music in this country because to these people music and dance is a vital part of their way of life and while ever something is living it must continue to grow and change.

Free Material # 48

WE are also offering an additional ten page article that Sister Duchesne has written that supplements the story of folk song in Papua New Guinea. It includes 4 songs with their music and is yours for just 2 stamps or 44¢.



Traditional Ballads Sung in North America

Introduction

Hundreds of ancient ballads stand at the threshold of modern American history and literature. These ballads are in origin purely European;n but they are the heritage of all settlers in North America since the 16th century. They have become rooted since that time in Newfoundland, and throughout Canada and the United States. The cultural impact of these songs, indeed, has not been unlike that of the English common law itself. The ballads, to be sure, constitute only a small portion of the total musical culture brought to these shores by European immigrant; but that portion is a very significant one.

Some of these ancient ballads were composed during the sixteenth century or even later; but most of them were the creation of the medieval and Catholic peoples of the British Isles and Scandinavia. The songs were brought to American shores after the Reformation by Catholic and Protestant settlers alike; they are imbued with the ethic and outlook of Christian medieval Europe. They deal with life and the human condition as found in a largely rural civilization; they are non-sectarian and non-denominational.

Many of the old ballads are American frontier songs simply because they were enormously popular with the early pioneers and were much sung upon the frontier and under frontier conditions. Families used them both to teach Anglo-American cultural history and background, and to entertain their members during the long winter nights when they gathered in the cabin to sing or to tell stories by the light of the fire.

The ballads are differentiated from other songs in our tradition because they focus upon narrative, because, that is, they tell a story. Because the ballads are magnificent examples of the storyteller's art they retain great value for people today who wish not only to seek to understand the world about them but to explain what happens there in an orderly, vivid, and systematic way. The songs, in other words, constitute irreplaceable models for American youth. Literary art, the inner life of the imaginative mind, and music -- all are drawn upon to illuminate the nature of human existence and the ambient world upon whose stage human conflict and human drama unfolds. For this reason we would argue that the ballads ought to enjoy a permanent place in the literary, musical, and intellectual education of all American young people.

The old ballads have many messages for us; one of the most important of these, perhaps, is that reality is a totality which human beings must use all their faculties and talents to analyze, to imagine, and to comprehend. Take away the dimensions of

imagery, compassion, music, language and symbolism from these creations, and the history that they seek to tell also ceases to exist.

The vast majority of the old ballads were created and sustained by an oral tradition -- never written down, but passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth alone. Only in the late eighteenth century did the recording and transcription of lyrics and melodies begin. The completion of this work, indeed, ranks as one of the great achievements of scholarship of the 19th and 20th centuries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. These songs were never meant to be merely spoken or 'read.' They were designed to be sung both from the hearts and the lips of people who had learned them by heart and who had made them the precious and permanent companions of their earthly lives. In talking about these ballads, then, we are talking about the re-creation of the oral, storytelling tradition as a major aspect of American educational work in the field of the language arts, history, ethics, and music. And we view the preparation of young teachers in this area as both task and challenge confronting schools of education.

We reproduce in the pages that follow some nine of the ballads, all of them incomparably fine examples of the high musical and literary art that embodies the social message of the oral teller of history. We add, at this place, a few suggestions about ways to teach these ballads that in a number of years experience we and some of our colleagues have found useful.

(a) Prepare a single-page songsheet presenting the lyrics and perhaps also the melody of one song. It is important that this sheet be well typed, nicely laid out and, above all, clearly reproduced and legible. It may also include brief background of the song, and a few vocabulary notes if there are strange or new words.

(b) Give out the songsheets, and ask the students to follow as you sing the song, or play it from a recording. This is both 'instant homework' and an aid in making the transition from written assignment to oral presentation.

(c) Sing the song a second time, asking the students to sing along.

(d) Then begin to ask questions both about what happens in the song, and about the meaning of words. We provide further suggestions about questions on page ____ below. You'll be surprised at how quickly discussion develops! Remember: you are introducing your students to original source material which for human fascination, vividness, and vitality has no parallel in all our vast historical literature.

The Child Ballads

One of the most important collectors of the old ballads was an American, a Harvard English professor, Francis James Child. He taught at the college from 1851 until his death in 1896. His monumental lifelong work was to collect and classify all of the great English and Scottish ballads. They were published in eight volumes , 305 ballads under the title The English and Scottish Popular Ballads in the years 1882-1898.

Child's collection is still the definitive standard treatise and is the starting point for every work of ballad scholarship. In fact the 305 ballads are all numbered and called Child Ballads in testimony to his prodigious research and writing. Interestingly enough, while he considered the ballads as magnificent, undying poetry, he did not have much interest in their music or tunes and mainly collected the verses in various variants to set down in print. Only 55 tunes are given in his appendix.

Fortunately for us, Child's ommission of the tunes has been rectified by Professor Bertrand Harris Bronson, a Professor of English at the University of California in Berkeley. Princeton University has published Bronson's work , Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads with texts. It appears in 4 large volumes between 1959-1972 and it is a monumental work which ranges in importance alongside of Child's 8 volumes. For those interested, both Child's and Bronson's works have been reprinted in economical paperback by Dover Press of New York City.

Thus when you hear or read the comment that this song is a Child Ballad, this does not mean it is a song for children, but one of Francis Child's Ballads. On the otherhand, you can try these songs with children from grade one and up. They have universal value which makes them as much children's songs as adult songs.

One of the co-editors (dare we name which one) remembers as a 2½ year old learning the Wraggle-Taggle Gypsy-O.And sang it as he played with his little firends. The poetry and depth of passion in that song and the other ballads enable children to empathize with the deep feelings of these ballad people. The other co-editor has sung these ballads endless times with his elementary students and the more they sing them, the more they loved them. They never tire of singing them for they are timeless and their stories are so basic that our students can relate to them easily. When future generations have all blasted off into orbit in space, people will still be singing them.

They were handed down orally and thus there are many versions and variants. These old ballads took the place of the then unknown daily newspaper, the six o'clock television and radio news. These ballads flourished and were sung in inns, taverns, at fairs, in the fields at harvest and haying time-wherever men and women gathered, labored, drank and loved. They told stories of passionate love and hate, of shipwrecks and murder, vengeful ghosts and unforgiving families.

These ballad themes are the very essence of our every day soap operas on television, our Hollywood movies, our magazines and gossip sheets. Similar stories with their counterparts appear in the

newspapers every day. They brought to the folk an excitement and romance that transcended their daily, narrow hard life in their villages, cities and farms. These ballads carried the folk away into a world of lords and ladies, intrigue and romance, howling storms and just retribution for faithless lovers.

Tllese hoary and tarnished ballads have lived through the ages and have been sung by an army of unknown singers who have cherished and polished them to a fine patina.

The tales they tell are easily remembered, burned into the memory of the lsteners and singers. They were told mainly in a dialogue form, the characters are always in action and any superfluous details have been stripped away. As we sing these songs, we are plunged into the midst of the unfolding drama. We are there -- not just as spectators, but almost as a Greek chorus -- involved and taking part in the unfolding story.

Some of the verses are pure poetry..From The House Carpenter:

She picked up her wee little babe;
Her kisses were one, two, three.
Said, "Stay at home my pretty little babe,
Keep your father good company."

Or in Mary Hamilton's lament:

Oh, little did my Mother think
When first she cradled me;
The lands I was to travel in
And the death I was to dee.

Many of these old ballads are often found even today in poetry and literature anthologies, printed as poetry with no hint that they are ballads meant to be sung. Without its music it is only a shadow of its true self. They need to be sung, to be experienced, to be brought to life. Not to offer them to our students, on every grade level from 1st grade through high school and into the college and university, is to deprive them of much beauty and emotion in their lives.

BRonson's comments in his The Ballad As Song, p.242, about Barbara Allen, speak for all the ballads:

> When someone asks why all this fuss and bother, this endless trouble and expenditure of time on an old song, the answer is: Because this old song, in its mere sheer commonness, strikes to our very roots. There is no obligation on these old things to survive. They have lived on in the minds and hearts of countless men and women, untainted by compulsion, for the purest and most disinterested reason possible to be conceived--- because they have continued to give joy and solace on the basic levels of artistic experience, to one generation after generation of our humankind.

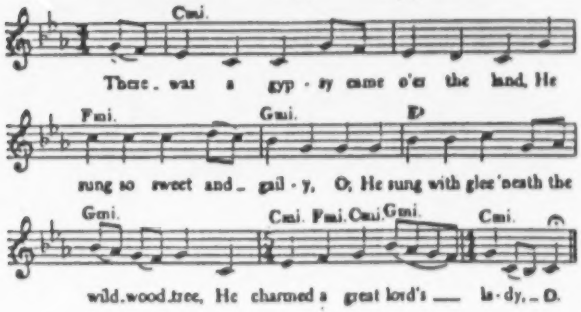
Wraggle Taggle Gypsies #200

The Gypsy Laddie is one of the loveliest of all our old ballads; it is a 'borderland ballad' from the region of the Scots-English border northwest of the Cheviot Hills. The song tells of a nobleman's wife who gave up everything to follow her gypsy lover. It has been set to many melodies, but the one given here is among the oldest. For three hundred years or more this has been one of the first songs that many a British and American child has learned at his mother's knee. It has been found in every state of the Union from Maine to Texas. With Texans, evidently, it has been an especial favorite; for that historically was a land so vast that everything, including love, had to go upon a horse.

Songs such as this are filled with exquisite touches in which great art is used to make the story that unfolds utterly real. Note how the passage of time is shown in the silence between verses four and five. The master, returning home 'late at night,' learns that his mistress has fled. The old servant man saddles up the 'best black mare;' he takes off, and rides by the riverside, where 'the grass was wet and dewy, O.' Evidently he has been riding all night, and the sun is rising upon grass that is flashing silver with the morning dew.

Many old British versions tell of Johnny Faa, a common gypsy name a few centuries ago. In 1609 the gypsies were expelled from Scotland and Faa and some of hisfolloweres were captured and hung in 1624 for still being in the country. In the 18th century, the wife of the Earl of Cassillis is made the heroine of the ballad. Although prenegaged to Sir John Faa of Dunbar, the Lady had married the Earl and bore him two children. Her old lover, presents himself at the castle while the Earl is absent, accompanied by a band of gypsies and himself disguised as a gypsy. He induces his old love to elope with him. But the Earl returns in the nick of time, pursues and captures the whole party and hangs all eight of the gypsies. The fugitive wife was banned from board and bed and confined for life in a tower at Mayhole, built for the purpose. "Eight heads carved in stone below one of the turrets are said to be the effigies of so many of the gypsies." The ford by which the lady and her lover crossed the river Doon is still called The Gypsies' Steps.

Wraggle Taggle Gypsies


Cmi.
There was a gyp - sy came o'er the land, He
Fmi.
Gmi.
Eb
sung so sweet and gail - y, O; He sung with glee 'neath the
Gmi.
Cmi. Fmi. Cmi. Gmi.
Cmi.
wild wood tree, He charmed a great lord's la - dy, O.

There was a gypsy came o'er the land
  He sang so sweet and gaily O
He sang with glee 'neath the wild wood tree,
  He charmed a great lord's lady, O

"Go bring me down my high-heeled shoes,
  All made of Spanish leather O;
And I'll put on my lowland brogues,
  To trip it oer the heather, O."

The lord came home late that night,
  Inquiring for his lady, O;
"She's gone, she's gone," said the old servant man,
  "She's gone with the gypsy Davy, O."

"Go saddle me my best black mare,
  The grey is ne'er so speedy, O;
For I'll ride all night and I'll ride all day,
  Til I overtake my lady, O."

Riding down by the riverside,
  The grass was wet and dewy, O,
Seated with her gypsy lad,
  It's there he spied his lady, O.

"Will you forsake your house and home,
  Will you forsake your baby, O?
Will you forsake your true wedded love
  And go with the gypsy Davy O?"

"Yes, I'll forsake my house and home,
  And I'll forsake my baby, O;
And I'll forsake my true wedded love,
  And go with the gypsy Davy, O.

"Last night I lay on a goose-feather bed,
  Sheets turned down so bravely, O;
Tonight I'll sleep in the mud and the rain,
  By the side of the gypsy Davy, O."

Child # 200 (J)

Lord Ronald (Lord Randal) #12

A brooding sense of the world's evil and a passionate cry of pain and weariness are embodied in "Lord Ronald," one of the starkest and loveliest of the classic ballads. Long a favorite in the British Isles, the United States, and Canada, the story is unfolded by a dramatic use of the dialogue form. Many of us get our first introduction to this song when as children we sing a parody of it, "Billy Boy." The version chosen for reproduction here was selected for the special beauty of its melody, which is Scottish.

Dm Em Dm
"Where has you been a' day, Lord
Em
Ron - ald, my son? Where has you been
Bm Em
a' day, my hand - some young one?" "I've been
G
in the wood hunt - ing; moth - er,
Em
make my bed soon, For I'm wea - ry, wea-ry
D Em
hunt - ing, and fain would lie down."

Lord Ronald (Lord Randal)

2. "O where did you dine, Lord Ronald my son?
O where did you dine, my handsome young one?"
"I dined with my sweetheart; mother, make my bed soon,
For I am weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

3. "What got you to dine on, Lord Ronald my son?
What got you to dine on, my handsome young one?"
"I got eels boiled in water that in heather doth run,
And I am weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

4. "What did she wi' the brew o' them, Lord Ronald my son?
What did she wi' the brew o' them, my handsome young one?"
"She gave it to my hounds for to live upon,
And I am weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

5. "Where are your hounds now, Lord Ronald my son?
Where are your hounds now, my handsome young one?"
"They are all swelled and bursted, and so will I soon,
And I am weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

6. "What will you leave your father, Lord Ronald my son?
What will you leave your father, my handsome young one?"
"I'll leave him my lands for to live upon,
And I am weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

7. "What will you leave your mother, Lord Ronald my son?
What will you leave your mother, my handsome young one?"
"I'll leave her my Bible for to read upon,
And I'm weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

8. "What will you leave your sweetheart, Lord Ronald my son?
What will you leave your sweetheart, my handsome young one?"
"I'll leave her the gallows-tree for to hang upon,
And I'm weary, weary hunting, and fain would lie down."

Geordie

#209

This famous ballad tells its story with simplicity and directness not easily matched in other ballads. The young wife goes to London to petition the King's Court for the life of her husband. He has stolen the deer from the King's hunting preserve; this is a privilege that the King guards jealously for himself; and he reserves severe punishment for those who break the game laws.

The young woman approaches the judge. "My Geordie," she tells the Court, never hurt a human being. He took wild animals, so that he could live. I have born two children, and one more 'lies in my body;' take them all, but spare my husband. What can I do for children without a husband to earn a living for them?"

The judge 'looks over his left shoulder' -- subtle touch, because 'left' is immemorially associated with what is bad, ominous. 'Sinister,' indeed, is simply a Latin word meaning 'left.' "I am sorry," he tells her, "I cannot pardon Geordie."

The song ends, as it begins, loud with woman's lament for the loss and pain of her life. Songs such as this rescue women from the alleged anonymity of their history. This woman's presence on the human stage can be as real in today's classroom as it was when the song was first heard by an audience, maybe four or five hundred years ago, or even longer.

Some English versions of this ballad have as its main character a common outlaw, who though a poor poacher, nevertheless comes of noble lineage. An old blackletter-broadside names him as George Stoole of Northumberland, who was executed in 1610, but many think the song is much older. Some commentators are of the opinion that Geordie may have been the leader of a gypsy tribe.

Sometimes GEordie is hanged by a silken cord. In some versions, his young wife is able to buy his freedom from the judges and sometimes from the King and both she and Geordie ride off to freedom. There are many variants and all are beautiful. This ballad was one of the most popular ones in my 4th grade class. It was always a sure winner, And its popularity continued at whatever grade level it was sung. The students felt a tremendous affinity for both the story and the tune. They use to learn it by memory the second or third time they sang it , without any apparent effort.

Geordie

arr. Kate Sidon + JWS
guitar
I
A5
I walked out over London bridge,
One misty morning early
I
over heard a
fair pretty maid was la-
ment-
ing for her
Geor- die

Geordie

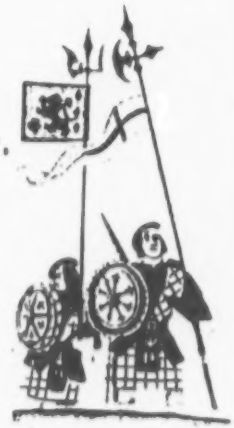
Child # 209

As I walked out over London Bridge,
One misty morning early,
I overheard a fair pretty maid
Lamenting for her Geordie

Ah, my Geordie will be hanged in a golden chain
'Tis not the chain of many,
He war born of king's royal breed
And lost to a virtuous lady.

Go bridle me my milk-white steed,
Go bridle me my pony,
For I will ride to London's court
To plead for the life of Geordie.

A h, my Geordie never stole nor cow nor calf,
He never hurted any,
Stole sixteen of the King's royal deer,
And sold them in Bohemy.



Two pretty babies have I born
The third lies in my body,
I'd freely part with them every one
If you'd spare the life of Geordie.

The judge looked over his left shoulder,
He said fair maid I'm sorry,
He said fair maid you must be gone,
For I cannot pardon Geordie.

Ah, my Geordie will be hanged in a golden chain,
'Tis not the chain of many,
Stole sixteen of the King's royal deer
And he sold them in Bohemy.

The Douglas Tragedy *7

This ballad, from Northumberland and the Scottish border, has also been much sung in the New World. It tells of a time when clan loyalties and family ties were very strong, and a woman had to be 'given away' in marriage by her father. Woe to the man who wooed a woman and sought to take her without her family's consent.

The world of which ballads like this one tell is not a make-belive literary world, but the real world in which men and women, who have lived in historical time, live, and move, and suffer. The colors, which the ballad paints, the fleeting light and shade which it conjures up, are part of reality. This is art which enables us to possess the past, to make it our own, as though it were the present. Lord William sets Lady Margret on a milk-white steed, he himself rides upon a dapple-grey; they ride by the light of the moon, which casts wan shadows upon the water. She sees the red blood flowing in the stream, and utters a cry of horror. And he answers with a line which for sheer imaginative power is almost unequalled in all our literature.

" 'Tis nothing but the shadow of my scarlet cloak
That shines in the water so plain."

The Douglas Tragedy is an example of an ancient ballad in which the lyrics have survived more perfectly than the traditional tunes to which it was sung. The melody that we provide here was collected from Mrs. Lloyd Bare Bragg, at Elk Park, N.C., in 1933.

WRiting about this ballad, Sir Walter Scott said:

The ballad of the 'Douglas Tragedy' is one of the few to which opular tradition has ascribed complete locality. The farm of Blackhouse in Selkirkshire, is said to have been the scene of this melancholy event. There are the remains of a very ancient tower, adjacent to the farm-house , in a wild and solitary glen, upon a torrent named Douglas burn, which joins the Yarrow after passing a craggy rock called the Douglas craig...From this ancient tower, Lady Margaretis said to have been carried by her lover. Seven large stones, erected upon the neighboring heights of Blackhouse are shown, as marking the spot where the seven brethren were slain; and the Douglas burn is averred to have been the stream at which the lovers stopped to drink; so minute is tradition in ascertaining the scene of a tragical tale, which considering the rude state of former times, had probably foundation in some real event.

The Douglas Tragedy

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed, And him-
self on a dapple grey, With a
bugle horn hung down by his side, And
lightly they rode away.

1/ He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And lightly they rode away.

2/ Lord William looked over his left shoulder,
To see what he could see,
And there he spied her seven brethren bold,
Come riding over the lee.

3/ 'Light down, light down, Lady Margret,' he said,
'And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren bold,
And your father, I make a stand.'

4/ She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until she saw her seven brethren fall,
And her father hard fighting, who loved her so dear.

5/ 'O hold your hand, Lord William!' she said,
'For your strokes they are wondrous sore;
True lovers I can get many a one,
But a father I can never get more.'

6/ O she's taken out her handkerchief,
It was of the hodland so fine,
And aye she's dighted her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

(dight: clean)

The Douglas Tragedy

7/ 'O choose, O choose, Lady Margret,' he said,
'O whether will ye gang or bide?'
'I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William,' she said,
'For ye have left me no other guide.'

8/ He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they both rode away.

9/ O, they rode on, and on they rode,
And all by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.

10/ They lighted down to take a drink
Of the spring that ran so clear,
And down the stream ran his good heart's blood,
And sore she 'gan to fear.

11/ 'Hold up, hold up, Lord William,' she says,
'For I fear that you are slain;'
'Tis nothing but the shadow of my scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water so plain.'

12/ O they rode on, and on they rode,
And all by the light of the moon,
Until they came to his mother's door,
And there they lighted down.

13/ 'Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'Get up, and let me in!
Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'For this night my fair lady I've won.

14/ 'O make my bed, lady mother, ' he says,
'O make it broad and deep,
'And lay Lady Margret close at my back,
And the sounder I will sleep.'

15/ Lord William was dead long ere midnight,
Lady Margret long ere day,
And all true lovers that go together,
May they have more luck than they!

16/ Lord William was buried in St. Mary's kirk,
Lady Margret in May's quire;
Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out of the knight's a briar.

87

Barbara Allen #84

Barbara Allen is one of the most widely and frequently sung ballads of all times and there has been recovered in the U.S.A. over 141 variants. The Library of Congress made a whole record of 39 of these variants collected in the field, mainly from older people.

A Western pioneer, writing to the folklorist, J.Frank Dobie, reported that Barbara Allen "was a favorite cowboy song in Texas before the pale faces became thick enough to make the Indians consider a massacre worth while."

In his American Songbag, Carl Sandburg wrote: Hard-hearted Barbara Allen is a girl who figures in hundreds ofballads. In nearly all of them Willie dies for love of her and she, with a wasted heart, goes into the grave-besides him. That is the story...It has been told and sung in hundreds of dialects. Usually the tune is stale, flat and monotone...Sometimes in the singing of this song, I get the feel of old, gnarled, thornapple trees and white crabapple blossoms printed momentarily ina blue sky, of evanescent things of the paradox of thunder and cruel forces operating together in life. Perhaps something of that paradox working in the hearts of people has kept the Barbara Allen sory alive and ringing through the centuries and more."

The melody is that of an old Scotchish folk song. Writing in his diary, January 2, 1656, Samuel Pepys states: In perfect pleasure I was to hear her sing and especially her little Scotch song of Barbry Allen." Oliver Goldsmith heard the ballad sung in the Irish midlands and in his third essay, 1765, writes: "The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when an old dairy maid sung me into tears with "The Cruelty of Barbara Alan."

While Tony prefers the version that tells that Sweet William (or Sir John Graeme) had fought a duel over Barbara Allen and had been mortally wounded (see Volume I #2), my favorite version are those that reveal him dying from unrequited love. When I sangthis with my elementary students, sooner orlater someone would ask, "Can you really die from love?" And I'd ask them, "Well, let's think about it. Are feelingsimportant to your physical well-being? How do you feel when you're angry, disappointed, hurt or crying? Do you feel like eating? Is it easy to fall asleep?"

And we usually got into a deep discussion of how feelings affected our health. Whether we eventually answered the initial question, "Can you really die from love", students truly got in touch with the power of their own feelings. Vocabulary terms such as "a broken heart", "disappointed lover", "pining and sighing" came into focus. Thus by singing this ballad -and many of the others, students were put into much better touch with their own feelings and the power of emotions.

> In one of his essay, Bertrand Bronson writes: "One explanation of the appeal of Barbara Allen is that the idea of love as a destructive power has been a potent concept for almost as long as the records of Western civilization can be traced. By the ancients it was looked upon as a seizure, a calamity, a madness; and the lover's madness was a disease also well known to the Middle Ages. In all early literature, as in the best loved ballads, love is an illness from which few or none recover. Because of it, Barbara's lover is doomed. Her own observation is as clinical as cruel, "Young man, I think you're dying." But what she does not as yet realize is that the disease is infectious. After her rash exposure, her death is almost equally predictable and imminent. She can do nothing to avert it. Love strikes unerringly, where he will.The ideal of a love so complete and entire as to be essential to the continuance of life is a conceptual archetype persisting through the ages, through all literature, the great and the least."

After rejecting Sweet William's love and his dying request that

No better, no better, I'll never be,
If I don't win Barbara Allen.

She hears his adieu and his reminder "to my dear friends all, to be kind to Barbara Allen".

As she walks homeward and hears the church bells knelling his death, her heart begins to turn, for she realizes she does love him and can not have him now. By the time she reaches her home, heart is also breaking and she knows her time is notlong.

Father, father, dig my grave, dig it long and narrow,
Sweet William died for love of me, I shalldie for sorrow.

The symbolic growth from William's grave of a beautiful rose, and that of a cruel briar from hers which climb to the top of the old church tower and there intertwine has been found in many ballads, butis most familiar in Barbara Allen.

In his notes to the record series, Long Harvest, Ewan MacColl wrotes about the rose and briar motif:

> The verse is to be found at the end of a number of traditional pieces and is very common in American versions of Barbara Allen. It is not a literay conceit, but the remnants of an old and very strong belief that the soul, on the death of the body, passes into or becomes a plant or a tree and that certain flora thus produced expresses the character of the dead person.

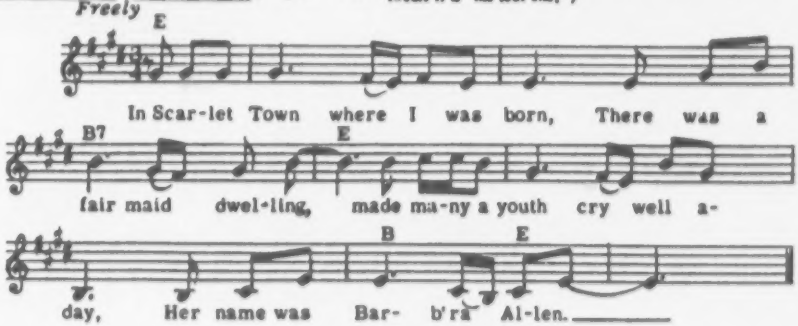
And Child comments in Volume I, p. 96:

> The beautiful fancy ofplants springing from the graves of starcrossedlovers and signifying by the intertwining of stems or leaves, or into their analogous ways, that an earthly passion has not been extinguished by death, presnts itself, as is well known very frequently in popular poetry. Though the graves be made far apart, even on opposite sides of the church, or one to thenorth andone to the south, outside of the church, or one wihtout kirk wall ,and one in the choir, however separated the vines or trees seek one anotherout, and mingle their branches or their foliage.

Barbara Allen

Pete Seeger, American Favorite Ballads, p. 79

(Samuel Pepys wrote in his 17th Century diary: "Heard this evening the delightful new Scottish song, Barbara Allen." Probably it is the most widespread old world ballad in the U. S. — of course, everyone knows a different version and swears it is "the real one.")



It was in the merry month of May
When green buds they were swelling;
Sweet William came from the west country
And he courted Barbara Allen.

He sent his servant unto her
To the place where she was dwelling;
Said my master's sick, bids me call for you
If your name be Barbara Allen.

Well, slowly, slowly got she up
And slowly went she nigh him;
But all she said as she passed his bed
Young man I think you're dying.

Then lightly tripped she down the stairs
She heard those church bells tolling;
And each bell seemed to say as it tolled
Hard-hearted Barbara Allen.

O, mother, mother go make my bed
And make it long and narrow;
Sweet William died for me today
I'll die for him tomorrow.

They buried Barbara in the old church yard
They buried Sweet William beside her;
Out of his grave grew a red, red rose
And out of hers a briar.

They grew and grew up the old church wall
Till they could grow no higher;
And at the top twined in a lovers' knot
The red rose and the briar.

The House Carpenter (James Harris) 243

Known also as James Harris or The Deamon Lover, this ballad is found in many sections of America. In this country it is best known under the title, The House Carpenter. The English version often brings in a supernatural or ghost element, usually not found in U.S. versions.

The oldest English text has been traced back to Pepy's book writing about 1675. Pepy's notes an English broadside entitled:

"A WArning for Married Women, being an example of Mrs. Jane Reynolds, a Westcountry woman, born near Plymouth, who having plighted her troth to a Seaman, was afterwards married to a Carpenter, and at last carried away by a Spirit, the manner how shall presently be recited. To a West- Country tune, etc."

In that version the story is of a young woman, Jane Reynolds engaged to a seaman, James Harris. Without Jane's knowledge, Harris is seized and impressed to sea. After 3 years, Harris is reported dead. After waiting a decent period of mourning, Jane then marries a ship carpenter and eventually has one or two children. Four years later, thus making the magic seven yearperiod, after hisdeparture, the spirit of Harris returns. Appearing in his natural form as her old lover, and reproaching her for abandoning him and playing on her fromer love for him, he woos her, promising her riches and a life of ease:

I've six ships a-sailing on the salt, salt sea,
And a hundred and twenty young sailormen shall be at thy command.

She abandons her baby and goes off with him on a spectral ship. Its masts are made of beaten gold and its sails of silk. There are no sailors to be seen on board, but off she sails. The American versions have all the other major ingredients--the sailing of the ship, the weeping of the maid for leaving her wee little babe, and the sinking of the ship to the bottom of the sea with both the lovers drowning.

Sir Walter Scott printed the ballad in his Minstrelsy of the Scotch Border. In Scott's version, once on board the seducer reveals himself to the maid as the Devil by showing her his cloven hoof. He then strikes the topmast with his hand, the foremast with his knee, breaking the ship into twain and "Sinks her into the sea."

In one New England version, in the last verse, a moral is drawn:

Come all you mothers far and near,
TAke warning now by me,
And never sell your babe for gold,
Lest you sink in the salt, salt sea. Barry, British Ballads from Maine, p.306

Some versions have an interesting last verse in which the house carpenter is introduced, lamenting hislose and cursing seamen:

Let this be a curse to all seafaring men
And a curse to the sailor's life,
For the robbing of a house carpenter,
And taking away his wife. Eddy, Ballads & Songs from Ohio p.72

HOUSE CARPENTER (JAMES HARRIS)

182

Alan Lomax, The Folk Songs of North America

The House Carpenter (James Harris)

1 ' Well met, well met, you old true love.'
' Well met, well met,' said she.
' I have just returned from the sea-shore sea,
From the land where the grass grows green.

2 ' Well, I could have married a king's daughter there,
And she would have married me,
But I refused the golden crown
And all for the sake of thee.'

3 ' If you could have married a king's daughter there,
I'm sure you are to blame;
For I am married to a house carpenter
And I think he's a nice young man.'

4 ' If you'll forsake your house carpenter
And come and go with me,
I'll take you where the grass grows green,
To the lands on the banks of the sea.'

5 She went an' picked up her sweet little babe,
And kissed it, one, two, three,
Savin', ' Stay at home with your father dear
And keep him good company.'

6 She went and dressed in her very best,
As everyone could see;
She glittered and glistened and proudly she walked
The streets on the banks of the sea.

7 They hadn't been sailing but about three weeks,
I'm sure it was not four,
Till this young lady began to weep,
And her weeping never ceased any more.

8 ' Are you mourning for your house carpenter?
Are you mournin' for your store?'
' No, I am mournin' for my sweet little babe
That I never will see any more.'

9 They hadn't been sailing but about four weeks,
An' sure it was not more,
Till the ship sprang a leak from the bottom of the sea
And it sank to rise no more.

Sir Patrick Spens #58

This ballad is included here as an example offolk poetry and the ballad art at its very greatest. The lyric is reproduced, with minor changes in spelling, from the first published version of the song that appeared in 1765. This is rounded out by the addition of verses 8-10 which appear in one form or another in other published versions and are necessary for the dramatic continuity of the story.

The age of this ballad, the xtent and nature of any factual basis for it are unknown; there is certainly no record of Sir Patrick Spens as a great Scottish mariner. Thoug we may be reasonably certain that the ballad came to Virginia and North Carolina with Scottish settlers in colonial times, it has evidently been little sung in the United States. The majestic melody with which thelyric is here linked comes to su through the singing of Ewan MacColl.

There is so much that we can read into this ballad if we wish. Did the old knight have it in for Sir Patrick Spens when he told the King about him? Why did the King order Sir Patrick Spens to go to sea at the stormiest season of the year, in the middle of winter? Why did he go when he was warned by his men and felt uneasy himself about going? Why didn't he just throw the king's letter into the sea?

It is the theme of a man doomed by his own excellence--classic like an opera. His exceptional skill is indicated

"Sir Patrick Spens is the finest skipper that ever sailed the seas.

The King's letter, signed by the King's own hand, caused his death.

While no actual happening can be proven to have inspired these verses, it has been suggested that this fine ballad may be based upon actual events.

Following the marriage of Margaret, daughter of Alexander II of Scotland to Eric, King of Norway in 1281,many of the nobles who conducted the young queen to Norway were drowned on the return voyage.

There is a verse in Scott's Minstrelsy :

"To Noroway, to Noroway
To Noroway o'er the faem(foam)
The King's daughter of Noroway
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

In the infancy of navigation, ships were liable to shipwreck in the north seas in the wintry months. Thus a law was enacted in the realm of James III that there be no ship launched out of the realm with any staple gudes from the Feast of Simday and Jude unto the feast of the purification of our Lady called Candlemass." (October 28-February 2nd)

So highly esteemed was this old ballad that Coleridge, the English poet wrote:

The bard be sure was weather-wise
who framed
The grand old ballad ofSir Patrick
Spens.

Referring to themagnificent last verse:

Half o'er, half o'er to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathoms deep;
And there lies good Sir Patrick Spens
With the Scots lords at his feet.

The island of Papa Stronsay, a small island, one of the Orcadian group, lies about half way between Norway and Aberdour. On it there is a large grave which has been known to the inhabitants since time immermorial as the grave of Sir Patrick Spens,So much for folklore versus history.

Sir Patrick Spens

2. Up and spoke an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea."

3. The king has written a broad letter,
And signed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens
Was walking on Leith sand.

4. The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh laughed he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his eye.

5. "O who has done this ill deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send me out this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea?

6. "Make haste, make haste, my merry men all,
Our good ship sails the morn:"
"O say not so my master dear,
For I fear a deadly storm.

7. "Late, late yester e'en I saw the new moon,
With the old moon in her arm,
And I fear, I fear, my dear master,
That we will come to harm."

8. They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the sky grew dark and the wind blew le
And angry grew the sea.

9. "O where will I get a good sailor,
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall topmast,
To see if I can spy land?"

10. He had not gone a step, a step,
A step but barely one,
When the bows of our goodly ship did break,
And the salt sea it came in.

11. O our Scots nobles were right loath
To wet their cork-heeled shoon;
But long e'er all the play was played
Their hats they swam aboon.

12. O long, long may their ladies sit
With their fans into their hands,
Or ere they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the land.

13. And long, long may their ladies stand,
With their gold combs in their hair,
Waiting for their own dear lords,
For they'll see them no more.

14. Half o'er, half o'er to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathoms deep;
And there lies good Sir Patrick Spens
With the Scots lords at his feet.

Mary Hamilton #173

Folklorists and historians have tried to race this ballad to a real person and a true incident, but without success. The story tells about Mary Hamilton, one of MaryStuart's four companion all named Mary, who bears a baby to the "highest Stuart of all".

In fear of being found out, she kills the baby andhides the body, denying its existence even to her lover. But several persons in the castle had heard the baby's crying and her crime is discovered The Queen sends Mary to Edinborough or Glasgow, "A wedding there to see". But once there she is seized by the sheriff tried, sentenced and hanged.

The famous Scotch author and poet, Sir Walter Scott, in his Minstrelsy of the SCOTCH BORDER, claimed that according to Knox's History of the Reformation, this event took place at the court of Mary Stuart. But added Scott, "the highest Stuart" was not not involved, nor was the unfortunate girl, Mary Hamilton. He states that in 1563 a FRench waiting maid who served in the Queen's chamber had an illegitimate child by the Queen's apothecary. They murdered the baby and were both hanged in Edinburgh. "It will readily strike the reader," says Scott, "that the tale has suffered great alterations as handed down by tradition; the French waiting woman changed into Mary Hamilton and the Queen's apothecary into Lord Henry Darnley. Yet this is less usrprising when we recollect that one of the heaviest of the Queen's complaints against herill-fated husband was his infidelity, and that even with her personal attendants."

Scott also tells us that another account informs us that this event happened in 1715 at the Russian court of Czar Peter. A Mary Hamilton, daughter of a Scotsman and wife of one of Peter's ministers, was chosen as the Empress's attendant because of her great beauty. She became involved with Ivan Orloff, a handsome aide-de-camp and bore him an illegimate child. While she was under the displeasure of her master and mistress for some other offense, the body of a child was found wrapped in a napkin. Under torture, she confessed to having killed two other children, one of which was rumored to be Peter's. Both she and her lover were executed.

Nevertheless, one great Scottish Puritan evidently believed the story about Mary Hamilton. John Knox wrote in his History of the Reformation: She was a French woman that served in the Queen's chamber and played the whore with the Queen's apothecary...The punishment was suitable because the crime was haynous... This was the beginning of the regiment of Mary, Queen of Scots, and these are the fruits that she brought forth of FRance-Lord! Look on our miseries amd deliver us from the wickedness of this corrupt court!"

When Mary Stuart was sent to France in 1548, shebeing then between five and six, she had for companions, "Sundry, gentlewomen and noblemen's sons and daughters almost of her own age, of which there were four in special of whom every one of them bore the same name of Mary, being of four sundry honorable houses, to wit, Fleming, Livingston, Seton and Beaton of Creich; who remained all four with the Queen in France dring her residence there and returned again in Scotland with her Majesty in the year of our Lord 1561. In the ballad their names are changed to Carmichael, Hamilton, Seaton and Beaton.

One of the most beautiful of the many stirring verses is when Mary laments her beauty that led to her downfall:

Oh, happy, happy is the maid,
That's born o' beauty free;
For it was my rosy dimplin' cheeks
That's been the devil to me!

In Peter and Iona Opie,the editors of The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, the Opies give:

Mary, Mary wuite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Withsilver bells and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

The Opies states: "Popular tradition has it that the original Mary was Mary, Queen of Scots, who with her gay FRench and Popish inclinations much displeased the dour John Knox. In this case, 'the pretty maids allin a row' might be

the renowned 'Four Marys', her ladies-in-waiting, and it has even been stated that the 'cockleshells' were the decorations upon a particular dress she was given by the Dauphin. Such assertions are, of course, the work of the 'happy guessers'! No proof has been found that the rhyme was known before the eighteenth century.

Child concludes that the ballad must have been created between 1719 and 1764 and comments: "It is remarkable that one of the verylatest of the Scottish popular ballads should be one of the very best."

The ballad has been well known and documented in print as early as 1790 when Robert Burns mentioned it in a letter.

And on March 13, 1965, the great dancer and choreographer, Agnes De Mille, presented her dance-theater piece based on Mary Hamilton, called "The Four Marys". The world debut was made at the American Ballet Theater at Lincoln Center's New York Theater. According to the review in the Herald Tribune, "Miss De Mille has tkane an old Scottish song which recounts a tragic romance at the court of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, and has projected it into the American scene, jsut as the ballad itself has become part of Americana. Thus the setting is no longer a royal court, but instead an antebellum Southern mansion in which the mistress of the house wields a power little different fromthat of a royal predecessor.

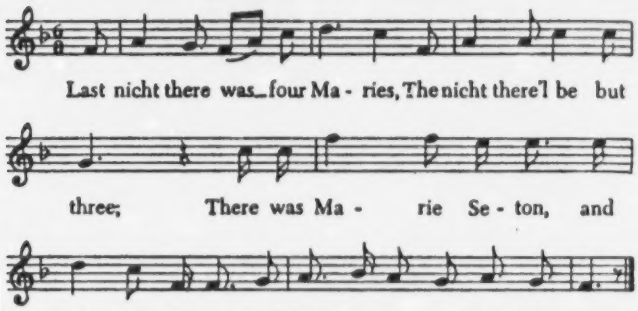
"The ballet deals with Mary Hamilton, a colored servant girl, who loves and is loved by the aristocratic suitor of the Mistress of the house, whom he forsakes for the beautiful maid-servant. The dance drama has its sources in this passionate incident and inthe revenge which brings death by hanging to the Negro woman."

And the New York Times commented: "T "The musical score, which is based on the ballad tune, has been carefully worked out...to allow stanzas of the song to occur when needed to advance the story...The important thing is that the work is wonderfully unified from beginning to end and that the dance does not seem an intruder in it. It is a lovely and touching theater piece."

Let us introduce this beautiful ballad with the gorgeous final verse in which Mary Hamilton sums up her fate.

Last night there were four Maries,
This night there'll be but three;
There was Mary Seaton and Mary Beaton,
And Mary Carmichael and me

Mary Hamilton


Last nicht there was four Ma - ries, The nicht there'l be but
three; There was Ma - rie Se - ton, and
Ma - rie Be - ton, And Ma - rie Car - mi - chael, and me.

1 Word's gane to the kitchen,
And word's gane to the ha',
That Marie Hamilton gangs wi bairn
To the hichest Stewart of a'.

2 He's courted her in the kitchen,
He's courted her in the ha',
He's courted her in the laigh cellar,
And that was warst of a'!

3 She's tyed it in her apron
And she's thrown it in the sea;
Says, "Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe!
You'l ne'er get mair o' me."

4 Down then cam the auld queen,
Goud tassels tying her hair:
"O Marie, where's the bonny wee babe
That I heard greet sae sair?"

5 "There was never a babe intill my room,
As little designs to be;
It was but a touch o' my sair side,
Come o'er my fair bodie."

6 "O Marie, put on your robes o' black,
Or else your robes o' brown,
For ye maun gang wi' me the night,
To see fair Edinbro' town."

7 "I winna put on my robes o' black,
Nor yet my robes o' brown;
But I'll put on my robes o' white,
To shine through Edinbro' town."

8 When she gaed up the Cannogate,
She laugh'd loud laughters three;
But whan she cam down the Cannogate
The tear blinded her ee.

Mary Hamilton

9 When she gaed up the Parliament stair,
The heel cam aff her shee;
And lang or she cam down again
She was condemned to dee.

10 When she cam down the Cannogate,
The Cannogate sae free,
Many a ladie look'd o'er her window,
Weeping for this ladie.

11 "Ye need nae weep for me," she says,
"Ye need nae weep for me;
For had I not slain mine own sweet babe,
This death I wadna dee.

12 "Bring me a bottle of wine," she says,
"The best that e'er ye hae,
That I may drink to my weil-wishers,
And they may drink to me.

13 "Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the main;
Let them never let on to my father and mother
But what I'm coming hame.

14 "Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the sea;
Let them never let on to my father and mother
That I cam here to dee.

15 "Oh, little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

16 "Oh, little did my father think,
The day he held up me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

17 "Last night I wash'd the queen's feet,
And gently laid her down;
And a' the thanks I've gotten the nicht
To be hang'd in Edinbro' town!

18 "Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there'l be but three;
There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me."

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The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World Edited by Albert B. Friedman pp. 184-186

Follow-up Ideas for Your Students

Questions for discussion: The Gypsy Laddie

Do you know what the lady means by 'lowland brogue'?
(a 'brogue' is a type of dialect, or country speech; also a very coarse, half-tanned or untanned shoe, without heel, traditionally used by country people for everyday work)

If she is going to put on rough shoes for walking across the heather, why will the lady also want fancy high-heeled Spanish shoes?

In the song the master of the house talks with the old servant man, and also with his lady. What do you think that dialogue of this type adds to the story?

The lady says that she is giving up everything that she possesses --a comfortable home, servants, a husband and child, a soft bed -- to go with a poor man she barely knows, and to sleep by his side 'in the mud and the rain.' Is this story believable? Is it likely that such a thing would happen?

Geordie

Are you familiar with the first name, 'Geordie?' It is the diminutive of George, or as we might say "Georgie-boy." Geordie is in common use in the north of England and Scotland; this tells us where the song may have originated.

The young woman wishes to ride to London's court, to plead for Geordie's life. What do you think the word 'court' means here?

Is it the palace where the King sits on a throne surrounded by nobles and servants in elegant clothing?

there is another, equally important meaning of the phrase London's court. What might that be?
(the Court was not only where the King lived, but where he heard cases, and gave justice. In the course of time the King appointed judges who represented him in what became a court of law)

The young woman goes to London, walks into the Court, and pleads for Geordie's life.

Are you surprised at the informality with which she does this?

What is this called, when a person can go to an authority and plead for something that she needs, and that authority may be able to give her? (It is known as the right of petition, and is embodied in the First Amendment)

Follow-up Ideas for Your Students

The young woman offers her two babies and the child that 'lies in her body' in exchange for Geordie's life.

How does this strike you?

What does 'lies in my body' mean?

The judge says that he cannot pardon Geordie. Why not? (pardon is a sovereign power that rests only with the King, not with judges who merely represent his will)

Why does the young woman think that the hanging of Geordie is an act of injustice?

What is meant by 'Bohemy?' It is hard to say; Bohemia, or Bohemy, was part of the Austrian Empire. The mention of this province may provide a clue as to a central European origin for this song.

What is the meaning of the word 'sinister?' Why do you think that we are told the 'judge looked over his left shoulder?'

There are three people in the song; all of them speak. Who are they? How does the dialogue help the story, and make it more vivid?

What does the song tell us about woman's life in that distant time?

Sir Patrick Spens

What exactly is the plot of this song? Is it necessary for us to know exactly why the King commands Sir Patrick to go to sea? What might be a good reason?

The story is told, with considerable speed and condensation, in fourteen verses, or 'frames.' Precisely what does each successive frame add to our picture of what is going on?

Which one of the verses do you like best, and why?

Verse 11: O our Scots nobles were right loath
To wet their cork-heeled shoon;
But long e'er all the play was played
Their hats they swam aboon.

What do you think that this means What is the enormous tragedy so lightly sketched by the contrast of 'shoes' and 'hats'?

Verses 12 and 13: the poet gives us a vivid picture of the ladies, sitting or standing, with gold combs in their hair and fans in their hands, waiting for their lords' return. How long will they wait, frozen in that posture?

Follow-up Ideas for Your Students

1. Have students make up a riddle bulletin board titled, "Do you know These People?" Let students write riddles about each ballad and post them up on the bulletin board. If they wish they can also illustrate them.

2. Have students select their favorite ballad. Working individually or in small groups, let them create a 3-dimensional collage illustrating the theme or action of the ballad. They can use easily available materials such as chalk, paint, colored tissues, different colored and textured papers, wall paper, foil, scraps of cloth, buttons, cotton balls, wooden spools, pipe cleaners, yarn, steel wool, clay, and papermachie.

3. Have your pupils choose a current news story that they are interested in (or a television soap opera chapter) and write their own ballad, describing the incidents in the story. (Just giving the bare details necessary). Then they can set it to one of the tunes used in this issue or to any folksong melody they know.

4. Another art project is to make a shadow box (shoebox or larger carton) of a scene or incident from one of the ballads. For instance, Barbar Allen-- they could make cutout cardboard dolls (or clothespin dolls) of Barbara Allen and Sweet William, the churchyard steeple withthe bells tolling.Put in some realia, such as the briar and the rose. For background, draw in on the sides and bottom of the shoebox the cemetary along with the sky and clouds.

5. Students could make ballad "book jackets" illustrating each ballad. The jacket could contain the title and pictures of leading characters or a dramatic scene. Then make a map of the British Isles and mountit on the wall or bulletin board. Place the book jackets all around the map. Run a piece of colored yarn from each book jacket to the country -Ireland, Scotland, or England to show the location on the map where the ballad took place.

6. Have class make a flannel board recreation of the story of the ballad. Construct figures of cardboard backed by sandpaper to adhere to the flannel , to portray the story. Make any needed scenery for the background. You can tape the class's singing of the song --or even have individuals or small groups sing each verse. This way the students will be free to manipulate the figures without having to try to sing at the same time. The students can present the flannel board ballad to another class or to their parents at a special event.

Award Presented to *Folksong in the Classroom* by the Middle States Council for the Social Studies 1985

The following presentation address was made by Robert Newell Bliss, President of Middle States Council for the Social Studies , on April 19, 1985 at Harrah's Marina Casino Hotel, Atlantic City, New Jersey. It was the fourth Daniel Roselle Lecture:

While Folksong In The Classroom did not begin to circulate as a quarterly until 1980, the importance of its founders and editors was felt much earlier than that. Tony Scott and Laurie Seidman met at a family gathering in Yonkers in 1972; they enjoyed a Cynthia Gooding concert together. They discovered that each in his own way had been incorporating folksongs into elementary and secondary school history classes. Early on, they collaborated in the production of volumes in the Alfred Knopf Living History Series. They teamed as presenters at innumerable seminars and workshops for teachers throughout the country, including many of the national NCSS annual meetings in Boston, Portland, Oregon, Chicago, New Orleans, San FRancisco, WAshington, D.C. during the past 13 years. While Laurie soon began specializing as a teach/trainer on the college level -Long Island University's C.W. Post Campus - Tony shared his enthusiasm and expertise bothwith students at the Ethical Cultural Society's Fiedlston School and as a folk singer at the Village Gate and Sturbrdige Village.

REcognizing that many singers and scholars had assembled excellent collections, and that there were those that were in addition composing contemporary folk songs, they decided to expand their energies and enthusiasm by demonstrating how to incorporate these and other songs into enriched courses in the social studies. Both men expanded and accelerated their field work, collecting and sharing. They are convinced that both elementary and high school students are moved and excited by the testimony of the words and the rhythm of the tune. They agree that for a teacher to use these original sources in the classroom requires courage, as does any new idea or practice. But two related qualities stand out: a conviction of the value of the material and guts or chutzpa! After all, one shouldn't tkae oneself too seriously; we all know that youngsters are as willing to laugh with us as at us!

Folksingers fall into two classifications: performers and songleaders WE perhaps have too many of the former; there are certainly far too few of the latter. And an instrument that will detract as little as possible from the song and story line is best; there are those that feel comfortable even without a guitar!

The work being done by Tony Scott and Laurie Seidman to enrich social studies classes all over the country is understood by far too few of us, even though there is now a Folksong Special Interst Group in NCSS and their newsletter has subscribers and disciples ciples in more than thirty states, "from California to the New York Island!"

So, today, we're privileged to hear Tony Scott demonstrate his craft and to share his enthusiasm for an admirable teaching tool.

This is the Fourth Daniel Roselle Lecture.

Book and Record Reviews

The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin

This excellent 48 page bulletin is published quarterly by the Canadian Folk Music Society and contains articles, notices, reviews and commentary on all aspects of Canadian folk music.

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We'll See You In New York This November!!

Despite vigorous and loud protests by Mayor Koch, the Chamber of Commerce, most educational institutions and some not so educational, your co-editors, Tony Scott and Laurie Scott (I even forget my name--it's Seidman) those ne'er-do-wells, have been invited again by popular acclaim to appear at the 66th Annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies and present a workshop on Teaching The Constitution Through Folk Songs.

It is rumored that a huge audience will be in attendance and we are prepared. Or are preparing to delight and inform teachers on all grade levels. WE are also having a separate Special Interest Group meeting , a regular business meeting to which we invite all teachers..We'd like to discuss the future of the newsletter, which looks good, the future of your co-editors, which looks bad, and how we can be of more help to you in your classroom.

As for our huge audience, we are used to brickbats, cat calls and sundry overripe vegetables. In fact, we thrive on such recptions. You may boo us to your heart's content, but you got to admit we're just the littlest bit loveable.

So be sure you come, it will be a great convetnion.

WE have now presented workshops at the NCSS annual meetings going back to 1972, only missing three of them-when they locked us in our room. Not bad, eh.

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